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SEVERAL
SERMONS,

Chiefly upon
Practical Subjects,

Many of which were preached before
Her Present MAJESTY,
WHEN
PRINCESS of WALES.

By Her Chaplain in ORDINARY,
The late REVEREND
NICOLAS BRADY, D. D.
Rector of CLAPHAM, and Minister of
RICHMOND in Surrey.

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SEVERAL
SERMONS
ON
CHRISTIANITY

Practical Subjects



PRINCIPLES

By Her Chaplain in Ordinary
The Rev. Mr. [illegible]

NICHOLAS BARNARD, Esq.
Secretary of the Admiralty

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SERMON XV.

Lot's Wife a Warning to Apostates.

St. LUKE xvii. 32.

Remember Lot's Wife.

THE principal and most useful Serm.
Design of History is not barely XV.
to divert and entertain the
Readers, or to amuse them
with a delightful variety of
Accidents, but to inform their Judg-
ment, and regulate their Practice, to im-
prove them at once in Knowledge and in
Goodness: and therefore it is, that in
relation to this End, we have frequent
Exhortations in the Word of God, di-
recting

Vol. II. recting us to remember the Times of old, to stand in the Ways and look for the old Paths, and to ask of the Days which are past, which were before us: for since the greatest part of human Wisdom is attained to by Experience and Observation; and since the Life of Man is so very short that his Experience can be but small, and his Observations few; it is therefore abundantly necessary to look backwards into the venerable Records of Antiquity; and to enquire, as *Job* adviseth, of the former Ages; because (as he inferreth) without such Assistances, *we are but of yesterday, and know nothing.* But amongst all the Registers of ancient Times, none call so justly for our most serious Attention, none should make so great an Impression upon our Minds, as those which are handed down to us by the Spirit of God, and are faithfully treasured up in the sacred Writings; since the Apostle assureth us, in relation to them, *that all those things happened unto them for Ensamples; and that they are written for our Admonition, upon whom the Ends of the World are come.* But of all those Examples with which the Scriptures abound, either of good Persons to invite us to their Imitation, or of bad, to frighten us from their Resemblance; that remarkable

markable Occurrence, to which my Text Serm. referreth, seemeth to carry the greatest XV. Weight along with it; being ushered in by our Saviour with a solemn *Memento*; at once to shew its Usefulness, and to bespeak our Regard of it; *Remember*, saith he, *Lot's Wife*. He had told his Disciples at the 26th Verse of this Chapter, that the coming of the Son of Man should be like the Destruction of *Sodom* and *Gomorrab*, in the Days of *Lot*; and that in two considerable respects: *First*, In respect of the Security of the People; *they ate, they drank, they bought, they sold, they planted, they builded*. *Secondly*, In respect of the Suddenness and Surprizal of the Judgment which fell upon them; *for the same Day that Lot went out of Sodom, it rained Fire and Brimstone from Heaven, and destroyed them all*: from whence having cautioned his Disciples, that they should not dally, but hasten their Escape, when they saw the Judgments of God approaching; he then subjoineth, as an instance of the Danger of such Delays, *Remember Lot's Wife*.

In this Story of *Lot* there are two remarkable Instances of God's Judgments; the one, the Destruction of *Sodom* and *Gomorrab*, with the Cities of the Plain, by Fire and Brimstone from Heaven; the

Vol. II. other, the turning of *Lot's Wife* into a Pillar of Salt; the first the Punishment of obstinate Sin, the latter of faint Virtue. The *Sodomites* are an Example of impenitent Transgressors, who presumptuously go on to sin with a high Hand; and *Lot's Wife*, of such as fall from their former Righteousness, and lose the recompence of Reward by not persevering unto the End: To those that continue obdurate in their Wickedness, we are to propose the Lake of *Sodom*; to those that are in a State of Grace, but in danger of Relapsing, we are to propose the Pillar of Salt. The Importance therefore of the Text is to caution those, whom God *bath called out of Darkness to his marvelous Light*, or from a Course of Sin unto the Ways of Holiness, that they do not faulter therein, or slacken their Diligence; lest looking back with *Lot's Wife*, they expose themselves with her to the Judgments of God; no less than they who stay behind in *Sodom*, and never enter upon the Paths of Piety.

IN my following Discourse upon which Subject, I shall make use of this easy Method:

I. I SHALL enquire into the Offence of *Lot's Wife*; which we must necessarily

cessarily suppose to be very great, since it was the Occasion of so remarkable a Judgment. Serm. XV.

II. I SHALL consider the Punishment inflicted upon her, and take notice of the Wonderfulness and Exemplariness of it.

III. I SHALL draw some practical Inferences, both from the Sin and from the Punishment; which may effectually convince us how proper it is for us and all Christians, to remember *Lot's Wife*.

I. I SHALL enquire into the Offence of *Lot's Wife*; which we must necessarily suppose to be very great, since it was the Occasion of so remarkable a Judgment.

WHEN the Angels, which were sent to destroy *Sodom*, conducted *Lot* with his Wife and Children out of it, they gave him this Charge in order to his Safety; *Escape for thy Life, look not behind thee, neither stay thou in all the Plain*: yet notwithstanding so plain and peremptory an Injunction, the miserable Woman trifled and hung back, and turned her Eyes towards the forbidden City, though the Consequences of it were denounced to be so fatal; so that she was guilty of a wilful Disobedience, doing that which

Vol. II. was absolutely prohibited, and despising
 ~~~~~ the Counsel of God against her own Soul.  
 Now if we enquire what Motives they  
 were, which induced her to look back in  
 opposition to God's Command, we shall  
 find her to have acted thus probably up-  
 on some such Accounts as these : either,

1. THROUGH Infidelity, or a Distrust  
 of the Truth of what the Angels had  
 foretold ; or,

2. THROUGH Faintheartedness, or an  
 Unwillingness to encounter with the Diffi-  
 culties she apprehended ; or,

3. THROUGH Worldlymindedness, or a  
 Fondness for the Conveniencies and En-  
 joyments of this Life.

1. WE may suppose her to have acted  
 after this Manner, through Infidelity, or  
 a Distrust of the Truth of what the An-  
 gels had foretold. She probably began to  
 doubt, whether it would happen as they  
 had threatned ; whether her Husband had  
 not been alarmed with a vain Fear of  
 Judgments which should never befall  
 them ; and therefore she must look back  
 to see, whether the Fire and Brimstone  
 were yet falling from Heaven, whether  
 the Fate of the City which she had left,  
 would really be so dreadful as she was in-  
 formed it should be : she yet saw no Ap-  
 pearance of it, and therefore repented  
 that

## Warning to Apostates.

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that she had been perswaded to leave it; Serm. XV.  
judging her Sons-in-law more wise in  
staying behind, than her self or her Husband in being terrified by such Bug-bears:  
thus her looking back proceeded from Unbelief, which is the Bane of Constancy  
and Perseverance; of Constancy in the  
Purpose and Resolution of our Minds,  
and Perseverance in the Tenour of all  
our Actions. And in this Particular too  
many of us, I fear, resemble *Lor's Wife*;  
we are apt to put far from us the evil  
Day, to think still that God's Judgments  
are at a Distance, till they fall upon us,  
and surprize us unexpectedly: though an  
Angel from Heaven should assure us of  
it, yet we will still be hoping that it shall  
not fare so ill with us; and being thus per-  
swaded, it is extremely natural to cast back  
a fond Look upon those darling Iniquities,  
which the Threats of God's Judgments  
were designed to drive us from. We can  
hardly be perswaded to leave our Sins, so  
long as we can hope to enjoy them with  
Security; and in order to retain them we  
are apt to flatter our selves, that however  
God may threaten to overwhelm us with  
his Judgments, yet he will not execute his  
Wrath upon us, nor suffer his whole  
Displeasure to arise: Thus do we dare to  
affront his impartial Justice, and en-  
deavour



Vol. II. deavours to invalidate his unalterable Truth; by foolishly pretending to magnify his Mercy; which though it is over all his Works, yet cannot transcend the other Perfections of his Nature, because there are no Degrees in that which is Infinite. But,

2. ANOTHER Reason which we may assign for this unhappy Woman's Disobedience to the divine Command, was her Faintheartedness, or her Unwillingness to encounter with the Difficulties she apprehended. She was perhaps discouraged at the uneasy Thoughts of a long and troublesome Journey through the Mountains; and the Prospect of new Troubles might shock her Resolution, after so many Removes as she already had with her Husband; from *Ur* to *Haran*, from thence to *Canaan*, after that to *Egypt*, then back to *Canaan* again, then to *Sodom*, and now to *Zoar*; this Reflection made her imagine she should never be at rest; and so inclined her to prefer the Ease of *Sodom* to the Safety of *Zoar*: and in this again we but too much resemble *Lot's Wife*; we can be at any Pains, and undergo any Hazards, to serve our Lusts, and never think it too much though we often miss our Aim; but when the Commands of God call us forth to any Trial, then the least

least Uneasiness maketh us faint and give Sermon  
over; every little Difficulty is a sufficient XV.  
Discouragement; every Change of Fortune  
is a Stumbling-block in our Way:  
and for this we must accuse the Corruption  
of our Minds, and not only the Frailty  
of our Nature; since God never requi-  
reth any thing at our Hands, but what he  
giveth us Strength by his Assistance to go  
through with; the Angel, we see, when  
Lot and his Wife lingered, took them by  
the Hand, and helped them forward;  
and whoever cheerfully setteth himself  
to obey God's Will, notwithstanding any  
Hardships that he may encounter in the  
Way; need not doubt to be assisted by  
God and his holy Angels, as effectually,  
though not as visibly, as these Persons  
were. But,

3. We may justly believe that Lot's  
Wife looked back to Sodom, through  
Worldly mindedness, or a Fondness for  
the Conveniencies and Enjoyments of this  
Life. It is likely she still retained a Ten-  
derness for that Place, a Love for the  
Plenty and Pleasures of that City, and  
was loath to leave the Comforts of her  
old Habitation: she had left her Treas-  
ure there behind her, and therefore her  
Heart was there also; she desired rather  
to run the Venture of perishing with  
her

Vol. II. her Wealth in that stately Dwelling; than  
 to expose her self to new Toil and Travel,  
 for a meaner though a safer Accommodation  
 in *Zaan*: thus the *Israelites* wished to  
 die by the Flesh-pots of *Egypt*, rather  
 than to bear the Hardships of the Wil-  
 derness; though in the Way to the Land  
 of Promise. And even in this Point too  
 is our Proceeding too much like that of  
*Lot's Wife*: Some who have, by the  
 Grace of God, weaned themselves in a  
 good Measure from their evil Courses, and  
 are going hopefully forward in the Ways  
 of Piety, do yet reserve in a Corner of  
 their Hearts a pleasing Remembrance of  
 their old Transgressions; and though  
 they do not presently give way to them,  
 yet they have Longings after them, and  
 wish they might: and as long as Men en-  
 tertain kind Thoughts of Sin, it is not  
 possible to be secure from being ensnared  
 by it; when it hath gotten and keepeth  
 possession of the Heart, it will soon extend  
 its Empire over the whole Man: *Lot's*  
*Wife*, no doubt, who cast back so fond a  
 Look towards *Sodom*, would very willing-  
 ly have returned thither, if she had not  
 been prevented by its Fate or her own;  
 so necessary is it to throw off and mortify,  
 not only Sin it self, but our Inclinations to  
 it also; to pretend to take leave of our  
 bosom



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bosom Iniquities, and at the same time **Serm.**  
carry along with us a Love and Tender- **XV.**  
ness for them; is to set up for Freedom, with the Marks of Slavery about us, and to drag a Chain after us, by which at any time we may be drawn back to our former Vassalage. But never is such a favourable Opinion of Sin more dangerous, than when compared with some Difficulties in a godly Life; when a Man seeth Ease and Pleasure and Profit on the one hand, and on the other hath the Prospect of Troubles and Afflictions, it is more than probable, that without an extraordinary Portion of God's good Spirit, his Choice will be determined to the former; he will grow weary of good but yet unprofitable Courses; will fall off for a little Riches, or some such worldly Consideration; and so lose the Praise and Fruit of all his former Performances, and relapse into the Danger which he had so nearly escaped from. This was the Sin of *Lot's* Wife, and I fear there are but few who can justify themselves, from having sometimes offended in a like Nature; let us, at least, take care that our Offence be not enhanced, as hers was, by these aggravating Circumstances:

I.) THAT after so many Years, wherein she had been the Companion of *Abraham*

Vol. II. *Sam* and *Lot*, in all their Travels and Afflictions, and still preserved her Integrity; yet after all she fell away. Winter Brooks (as *Job* termeth unstable Professors) if they dry; Summer Fruits (as *Amos* speaketh of them) if they putrify; if Morning Clouds (as another Prophet stileth them) scatter and vanish away; if shallow-rooted Corn (as the *Psalmist* wordeth it) be nipped and come to nothing; it occasions no wonder, and is no more than might be expected; but when the Seed, which had not only taken Root in good Ground, but was grown up to full Maturity, shall at last be blasted and wither away; this is a Case as much to be lamented, as theirs who have past the Danger of the Seas, and at length are shipwrecked in the very Harbour. Though *Lot's* Wife had been in *Egypt*, yet was she not defiled with the Superstitions of that Nation; though she had lived in wicked *Sodom*, yet she was untainted with the Sins of that Place; she had neither fallen away through the Famine of *Canaan*, nor been misled by the Abundance of the Cities of the Plain; and yet now at last she forfeiteth her Innocence, she committeth a most gross and presumptuous Transgression; and all her former Performances have but this unhappy Consequence, to make her present

sent Crime more heinous and inexcusable. Serm. XV.

2.) ANOTHER great Enhancement of her Offence was, that then of all Times she so remarkably fell, when, by the special Favour and Mercy of her God, she had the greatest Encouragement and Assistance to stand: she was then but just brought out of *Sodom*, and freshly warned of the Danger that might ensue; she had Angels to guide and support her in her Journey, and was even entering into *Zoar* the Haven of her Rest; and yet she neglected all these Mercies, and frustrated the gracious Design for which they were intended: this was a scandalous Contempt of God's visible Assistance, a most ungrateful Return for his signal Mercy towards her; and must needs give great Offence to her Husband and her Daughters, and therefore was an extraordinary aggravation of her Guilt. Thus have I endeavoured to set her Sin in a true Light, that the miraculous and dismal Effect of it may not appear too severe; but that *God may be justified in all his Doings, and clear when he is judged.* I proceed now,

II. To consider the Punishment inflicted upon her, and to take notice of the



Vol. II. the Wonderfulness and Exemplariness of  
 it.

WHEN this unhappy Woman, in direct Disobedience to God's express Command, had looked back to the City that was marked out for Destruction; God was pleased to punish her in a most amazing manner, by changing her into a Statue or Pillar of Salt: a Judgment so extraordinary and unusual, as sufficiently testified his Indignation against an Offence that provoked him to so great Severity. The Wages of Sin is Death, which she most justly deserved, who refused Life and Safety upon such easy Terms: it is true, the very Name of Death is extremely terrible, but this of hers was eminently so upon several Accounts. First, In that it was a sudden Death, which all Men dread and pray against; she looked back, but never looked forward any more, that was her last Look. Secondly, In that the Judgment overtook her in the very Act of Sin, and so could leave no possibility of Repentance; this maketh Death most truly the King of Terrors, to have no Time allowed to atone for that Offence, which hath armed the Hand of God against one; and yet thus it was with her, she died in the very commission of her Crime, with her Face towards Sodom.

Thirdly,

Thirdly, We all desire to die the common Death of Mankind, and to be visited after the Visitation of other Men; but a strange unusual sort of Death, to have the Lord make a new thing for us, that giveth Death an Appearance more frightful than ordinary; and yet thus singularly miserable was her Condition, she was the first and last that ever died that Death, she was made her own Monument, and became a Pillar of Salt. Fifthly, Whereas we naturally desire a decent Burial, and not to remain a Spectacle above Ground; she was set up as a lasting Memorial of God's Wrath, and a By-Word of Reproach to all Posterity. If we will give credit to several substantial Authors, we are informed that this Pillar was extant in our Saviour's Time, and had continued undefaced for so many hundred Years; *Josephus* saith, that he saw it, and some modern Travellers have affirmed the same: God indeed doeth often root out the Remembrance of the wicked; but many times also maketh them lasting Monuments of his Justice; that following Ages by their Fate may be warned from their Offences, and that all Things, even the Destruction of Sinners, may work together for Good to such as fear him; thus is it his Property to draw Good out of Evil; and

Vol. II. and therefore he suffereth not the Examples of ill Men to vanish, but setteth them up as Pillars for the Generations to come: God, if he pleased, could have caused the Earth to open her Mouth, and to swallow up this wretched Creature, so as no Remembrance of her should have remained; but he chose in his Wisdom to make her Punishment more exemplary, and to fix her for a Caution to all such as should come after. Thus as God embalmeth the Memory of the Just for our Imitation, so he fixeth a Brand of Infamy upon that of the Wicked for our Admonition; and the Rellish of *Lot's Wife's* Pillar, as well as the Scent of *Mary Magdalene's* Oyntment, shall last to all Posterity, for our Use and Instruction. That therefore it may have this due Effect upon us, I proceed,

III. To draw some practical Inferences, both from the Sin and from the Punishment; which may effectually convince us how proper it is, for us and all Christians, to remember *Lot's Wife*. And,

I. If by the Grace of God we have escaped out of *Sodom*; if the Sense of his Judgments hanging over our Heads, hath made us turn our Backs upon our former Transgressions; let us then learn from this

memo-



*Warning to Apostates.*

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Serm.  
XV.

memorable Example, to take great care not to relapse into them again; but constantly to hold on our Course to *Zoar*, with Steadiness, Resolution, and Perseverance: Let no worldly Consideration of Ease, or Pleasure, or Profit, tempt us to cast back our Hearts, or our Eyes, to those Things whose End is Fire and Brimstone; let us never more entertain a kind Thought of those Sins, which had so nearly involved us in the common Ruin. Few Men are so obstinately hardened in Impiety; but that the immediate Apprehension of God's Judgments will lay some Restraint upon them for the present; but as soon as these Fears and Pangs are over, they remember them no more than a Woman doeth her Travail; they begin to view their old Sins with Tenderness and Delight, and wish, at least, that they might embrace them securely again: so that all the while that they seemed to have forsaken them, it is very manifest that they did not leave their Crimes, but only fly from the Punishment of them; they rather sought to escape from the Fire and Brimstone, than from the Pollutions of the Cities of the Plain. And while Men are thus disposed, what can be expected from them, but that they should both look and return back to their former

C

Courses,

Vol. II. Courtes, when they think they can do it with any Impunity; if they are not prevented from such a Practice, either by God's deserved Judgments, or by his undeserved Grace! If we bring not our Hearts as well as our Feet out of Sodom, it is impossible we should persevere in our Resolutions of leaving it; and without that, in vain do we hope to escape; if we fail and look back, though at the Gates of Zoar, the Judgments of God will overtake us even there; since only to him that endureth unto the End, is the Promise made that he shall be saved. But,

2. LET us learn from this memorable Example in the Text, that though we may escape general Judgments, yet if we retain or return to our Sins, God hath particular Judgments in store, with which to chastise our Folly and Ingratitude: Though Lot's Wife was not involved in the publick Ruin of Sodom, yet as dreadful a Punishment overtook her when she was out of it. And I wish this were constantly remembered by us: for we are all too apt to please our selves with golden Dreams; and to flatter our selves with the hopes of an uninterrupted Prosperity, since we have escaped the publick Calamities that formerly threatned us; and there

is no doubt, but that all Things will end Serm.  
in good to those that are good, and that XV.  
continue such without wavering or faint-  
ing ; but let not others flatter themselves,  
that therefore they shall be safe ; though  
God spare the City from open Destruction,  
for the sake of ten Righteous which  
are therein, yet hath he other Ways  
whereby he can punish the Wicked :  
though they outlive perhaps the publick  
Calamities, of War, or Famine, or Pesti-  
lence, or the like ; yet private Afflictions  
may render their Condition as irksome and  
intolerable, as it could have been under a  
general Infliction. Nor doeth God only  
punish impenitent Sinners with these or  
the like unusual Visitations of Men ; but of-  
tentimes stretcheth forth his Hand against  
them, with very extraordinary though  
particular Judgments ; of which Lot's  
Wife is not the only Monument, since all  
Ages afford us Instances of a like Nature.  
*O consider this all ye that forget God, and*  
*remember Lot's Wife ;* though you be  
not turned into a Pillar of Salt, yet may  
you expect some other as severe a Judg-  
ment ; the Justice of God will certainly  
oblige him, if in despite of all his Warn-  
ings, you turn back your Face to Sodom,  
to fix you unalterably in that Posture ;  
to make your Sin become your Punish-  
ment ;



Vol. II. ment; to abandon and give you up to final Impenitency, the most dreadful Estate on this side Hell. And now if God's Displeasure be so very great, against those who stand doubtful and irresolute, not knowing whether they should return to the Pleasures of Sin, or go on in Piety to the Salvation of their Souls; how much more heavy will their Condemnation be, who *turn again with the Dog to his Vomit, and with the Sow that was washed to her wallowing in the Mire!* They do not only look, but go back to *Sodom*, which is much more provoking than if they had never left it; and therefore they must expect, with that accursed Place, to have their Portion in Fire and Brimstone. But,

3. FROM this memorable Instance of God's just Judgments, we may observe the great frailty of humane Nature; and how dangerous it is for Christians, under the most plausible Circumstances, to set up their Rest, or slacken their Diligence, against the Attempts of their grand Adversary. She who had stood firm under so many Trials, in such variety of Conditions; who in many Years Conversation was never polluted with the Errors of *Egypt*, or the Vices of *Sodom*; yet now, when she hath Angels to guide and assist her, when she is within a few Paces of  
the

the Gates of *Zoar*, a Place of Refuge and Security ; she miserably faileth, and thereby loseth the Reward of all that she had done or suffered before. She who had never yielded to the Temptations of *Sodom* when she was every Day surrounded by them, is now destroyed by them at a Distance, after she had turned her Back upon them. We see then by this that no Time or Place can secure us against the malicious Attempts of him, who walketh about Night and Day seeking whom he may devour ; so that we ought always to stand upon our Guard, and to work out our Salvation with Fear and Trembling : when we think that we are most safe, then may we be in the greatest Danger ; Temptations that are made openly and come violently upon us, give us fairly the Alarm to arm our selves against them ; but then it is that we run the utmost Hazard, when they come by surprize or stealth upon us ; they then glide insensibly into our Heart and our Affections, and we are almost overcome before we find it needful to resist them.

THESE then, not to detain you with any more at present, are some of those things for which we should remember *Lot's Wife* ; these are some of those Uses which should be made by us, both of her

Vol. II. Sin and of her Punishment: we are to learn, that without persevering to the last, all our former Labours will avail us nothing; that though upon the hopeful beginnings of Repentance, God should preserve us from publick Judgments; yet if we afterwards return to our old Iniquities, he hath particular ones in reserve to punish our Relapses; and that therefore we ought never to rest in Security; but to employ our utmost Care and Watchfulness, and heartily to beg for God's Grace and Assistance; that we may not fall back into those Sins, and so incur those Penalties, from which by his Mercy we have happily been rescued. And now I have all this while been directing my Discourse to such as are supposed to have come out of *Sodom*, and to have made some Progress at least towards *Zoar*; but this, I am afraid, confineth my Discourse only to a small part of Christian Professors; since it is but too plain that in this corrupt Generation, many have been so insensible, so much unmoved, at the nearest and most visible approaches of God's Judgments; that they have not so much as offered at Repentance, or advanced one Step towards a Reformation; what else meaneth that coldness towards the publick Worship, and the unfrequentedness of  
our



our Churches, upon the ordinary Week Sermon. Days, in comparison of those Numbers XV. that might repair thither? What else meaneth the staying away of such a Multitude from the Sacrament? What else meaneth that habitual Swearing and Profaneness, that Rioting and Excess, those Strifes and Contentions, which are still as rife and infamous amongst us as ever? These may, with *Lot's Sons-in-Law*, stay still in *Sodom*; and rather choose to share the Fate, than to quit the Corruptions of that Place: and with these, as my Text is unconcerned, so I shall not spend many Words upon them; but shall only advise them to consider, how much greater their Offence is, than hers which was thus punished; and not barely to remember *Lot's Wife*, but to think upon the Fate of *Sodom* and *Gomorrab*. But you, who by a timely Repentance, endeavour to flee from the Wrath to come, and are happily entered upon the Paths of Piety; it is you that we earnestly exhort and encourage to proceed with Steadiness and Resolution; chearfully to go wherever God calleth you, even to *Zoar* though a little one, so your Souls may live there; not to despise the meanest Condition, but to submit to the lowest Accommodations of Life, if you may be sure, by such a Procedure,

Vol. II, to be safe from Sin and from the Punishment of it. Having made your Escape out of *Sodom*, cast not so much as an Eye back upon it; stand not wavering and in suspense, as it is the Misfortune of too many, looking about and unable to resolve, whether you should move on to *Zoar*, or back again to *Sodom*; but as the Apostle well adviseth, *forgetting those Things which are behind, and reaching forth to those Things which are before, press forwards towards the Mark, for the Prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.* And whenever you find your selves under a strong Temptation to relapse again into your former Impurities; let this dreadful Example confirm your good Intentions, and stand fast in your Integrity by remembering *Lot's Wife*,

*Now to God the Father, Son and Holy Ghost, be ascribed all Honour, Power, Might, Majesty, and Dominion, henceforth and for evermore, Amen.*



SERMON



# SERMON XVI.

Peace of Conscience the good  
Man's Portion.

---

JOB xxvii. latter Part of Ver. 6.

*My Heart shall not reproach me so long  
as I live.*

**W**HAT a noble Resolution is Serm.  
XVI.  
this of *Job*! and how suitable  
to the Character of a Man of  
true Honour! How forcibly  
doeth it command our Approbation and  
Applause, and how justly doeth it chal-  
lenge our Imitation! How agreeable is it  
to that illustrious Testimony, which God  
himself vouchsafeth to give of this great  
Man; *That he was perfect and upright in  
all his Ways, one that feared God, and  
eschewed*



Vol. II. *eschewed Evil!* How plainly doeth it strike at the Conduct of some Men, who think it enough to carry a fair Out-side, and give no occasion of Scandal by their Words or Actions; whilst their Hearts, like the inside of a painted Sepulchre, are only filled with Rottenness and Corruption! What an Armour of Proof is this steady Temper of Mind against all the Attempts both of Men and Devils! and how powerful an Antidote is it against the Malignity of those Evils, which may at any time assault either the Body or the Soul! How strongly doth the holy Patriarch in my Text intrench himself in his own Integrity! How doth he from thence, as from an impregnable Fortrefs, look down upon the Malice of his implacable Enemy, and the severe Misconstructions of his uncharitable Friends! being secured against all their Efforts by this Amulet of Defence, *My Heart shall not reproach me so long as I live!*

WE find this great Example of Patience and Resignation stripped at once of all the Enjoyments and Conveniences of Life; the Hedge of God's Protection in a great Part broken down; his whole Estate wasted in the Compass of a few Hours; and himself become suddenly as destitute and naked, as when he came in-

to the World, and brought nothing with Serm. him into it; his numerous Progeny cut XVI. off at a Stroke, and taken away at once by the Hand that gave them; his Body overwhelmed with Pain and Putrefaction; and his Soul afflicted in its most sensible Part, by the bitter Reflections of his miserable Comforters. For though his Friends came upon the first report of his Misfortunes, with kind Intentions to console with him and comfort him; and accordingly, in compliance with the heaviness of his Grief, sat in silence upon the Earth with him seven Days and seven Nights; yet afterwards, being ignorant of the secret Intents of God's Providence, and supposing his Sufferings to be the Consequences of his Guilt; in a mistaken Zeal they accuse him of Unrighteousness, and condemn him for not giving Glory unto God, by a Confession of those Offences, which had drawn down such Judgments. What hath he now to sustain him under all these Extremities? Whither shall he betake himself for Comfort and Consolation? If he looketh up to Heaven, God seemeth to have forsaken him, and to have given him up to the Rage of his infernal Adversary: if he looketh abroad, he seeth his Friends acting the part of *David's* Enemies, casting him hourly

Vol. II. hourly in the Teeth, and saying unto him, *Where is now thy God?* He hath no course to take but to turn his Eyes inwards; and by the Prospect of a Heart which had nothing to upbraid him with, and the Evidence of a Conscience that *was void of Offence*, to raise fresh Supports from this inward Fund of Comfort, against all those Calamities which did attack him from without. Thus we find him fortifying his Resolution to this purpose; *Till I die*, says he, *I will not remove mine Integrity from me; my Righteousness I hold fast, and will not let it go; my Heart shall not reproach me so long as I live.*

IN my following Discourse upon which Words, I design to insist upon these three Particulars:

I. I SHALL examine what is here meant by those inward Reproaches of the Heart, which the holy Patriarch resolveth to be free from.

II. I SHALL consider the vast Extremities to which he is exposed, who is liable to these inward Reproaches of the Heart; and the great Happiness of him who is exempted from them.

III. I



III. I SHALL lay down some Rules and Directions by which we may be able to secure our selves against these inward Reproaches of the Heart.

Serm.  
XVI.

I. THEN, I shall examine what is here meant by those inward Reproaches of the Heart, which the holy Patriarch resolveth to be free from.

GOD hath erected within the Breast of every Man a most equal and impartial Court of Judicature, by which all his Thoughts, and Words, and Actions, are either acquitted, or condemned: in this Tribunal Conscience sitteth as Judge, and trieth and passeth Sentence with an unbiassed Integrity: the Laws of God and Nature, are the unalterable Standard, by which the Causes are determined, and the Judgment regulated; and pursuant to the Verdict which is given of them there, we are either pleased, or dissatisfied, with our several Performances: Thus, if our Proceedings are just and laudable, we have nothing from within, that clasheth with, or contradicteth them; our Souls give an inward Approbation to them, and we find a sensible Satisfaction arise to us from their Practice: but if we commit such things as are blameable and unlawful, we feel an inward Principle that thwarteth

Vol. II. thwarteth and opposeth them, and our  
Heart flieth in our Face, and protesteth  
against them. For God hath not left  
himself without a Witness in our Souls;  
which beareth Testimony to the Right-  
eousness of his Injunctions; and as it first  
dischargeth the Office of a Judge, by ei-  
ther condemning or approving our Actions  
and Omissions; so doeth it proceed fur-  
ther to put the Sentence in Execution, by  
punishing or rewarding us, according to  
our Deservings. That inward Regret  
then, which no Offender can get quit of,  
unless his Conscience be seared by habitual  
Impieties, is that which the Patriarch  
here stileth the Reproaching of the  
Heart: those private Lashes which the  
Sinner feeleth, and which are able to  
damp his greatest Jollity; which give  
him a surprizing Uneasiness in the midst  
of his Prosperity, and make his Coun-  
tenance fall, and his Head hang down,  
under the vastest Affluence of temporal  
Enjoyments: that Self-conviction by  
which he is constrained (partial as he is)  
to condemn his own Practices, to pass a  
severe Judgment upon himself, and to  
sign, as it were, the Warrant for his own  
Execution; this is that uneasy state and  
temper of Mind, which righteous *Job*  
determineth always to keep clear of,  
when

when he resolveth, that his *Heart shall* **Serm**  
*not reproach him so long as he liveth.* A Re- **XVI.**  
solution grounded upon the strongest  
Reasons imaginable; since thereby he  
avoideth the most intolerable Uneasinesses,  
and secureth to himself the choicest and  
most valuable Advantages. Which bring-  
eth me to consider,

II. THE vast Extremities, to which he  
is exposed, who is liable to these inward  
Reproaches of the Heart; and that great  
Happiness of him who is exempted from  
them.

AND here let us take a distinct View,  
both of the one Condition and the other;  
by examining,

1. THE vast Extremities to which he  
is exposed, who is liable to these inward  
Reproaches of the Heart, and by enqui-  
ring,

2. INTO the great Happiness of him  
who is exempted from them.

1. As to the first of these; we cannot  
make a truer Estimate of the Horror and  
Misery of the former Condition, than by  
considering, that he whose unhappy Lot it  
is, laboureth under the greatest Calamities  
at home, and is incapable of receiving  
any Comfort from abroad. These in-  
ward Reproaches, like a Gangrene in the  
Bowels,



**Vol. II.** Bowels, are continually preying upon his most sensible Parts, and wearing him away with extremity of Torment: they make him afraid to keep himself Company, and not dare to converse even with his own Thoughts; his Heart holdeth forth to him a Glass that will not flatter, and which sheweth him his Transgressions, in their true Deformity; startling and surprizing him with the hideous Prospect, and amazing and confounding him with a Reflection upon their Consequences: Fain would he get rid of these uneasy Remembrances, but findeth it impossible to fly from himself; and in vain doth he shift Places in order to be easy, whilst he carrieth his Tormentor every where about with him: He may run to and fro like a wounded Deer, but the bearded Arrow still sticketh fast in him; and he may fret and flutter, like a Bird in a Net, whilst he only tryeth and entangleth himself by his ineffectual Struglings: Solitude is to him no Refuge from ill Company, nor can it silence the Loudness of his inward Clamours; and Darkness cannot shelter him from this Bosom Enemy, but its solemn Obscurity is as the Shadow of Death: The Calumnies of other People may shock and disturb a Man, but the Reproaches of the Heart pierce like a two edged

edged Sword; in the former he may support himself by the Sense of his own Innocence, and may pity or despise the Malice of his Accusers; but in the other he is forced at once to assent to the Truth of them, and to be covered with Confusion at the Conviction they carry with them; for though *the Spirit of a Man may sustain his other Infirmities*, yet when that it self is wounded, *who can bear it!* This is the miserable Condition of the self-convicted Sinner, whilst his Prospect is confined within his own narrow Precincts; and if he enlarge it ever so much, and look ever so far abroad, he can meet with nothing there, that is capable of relieving him. For if he endeavour to divert these sad Thoughts by pleasant Conversation, or choke them with Riot, or drown them with Intemperance; Conscience will intrude like an unwelcome Guest, and will whisper unpleasing Truths in the midst of all his Merriment, and dash his sweetest Draughts of Pleasure with Gall and Bitterness. Suppose him to enjoy the greatest earthly Grandeur; let him be elevated by his Parasites, even above Mortality, and by their fulsome Panegyricks be deified whilst alive, yet Conscience will give the Lye to all these Flatteries, will accost him without Ceremony with

D

his

Vol. II. his proper Titles, and if his Heart can reproach him with Violence and Oppression, that will hollow in his Ear, that he is a Robber and a Murderer: no Guards can keep off this troublesome Inmate; no Treasure can bribe it, no Favour byass it; but it will impartially discharge its threefold Office, of Accuser, Judge, and Executioner: He may (as the Prophet *Jeremiah* wordeth it) go up to *Gilead*, and take Balm; but in vain shall he use many Medicines, for he shall not be cured. How dismal then must the State of that Man be, who is thus racked incessantly with inward Anguish, and can meet with no Relief from any thing without him! so dismal, that no Description from another can reach it, and one must first feel it, before he can decypher it; God grant that none of us may be thus qualified for the Office, or buy a clearer Knowledge of it by so dear an Experiment! But let us shift the Scene from this melancholy Prospect, and enquire,

2. INTO the great Happiness of him that is exempted from these Reproaches of the Heart.

AND here we meet with nothing but Sereneness and Tranquillity, the constant Refreshments of an inward Comforter, that speaketh Peace to the Soul, and  
Healing



Healing of the Bowels. This it was that supported the Primitive Christians under the sharpest and most grievous Persecutions; and made them with the Apostle count it all Joy, when they fell into divers Temptations; their Rejoycing was this, *the testimony of their Conscience; that in simplicity and godly sincerity, they had had their Conversation in this World.* No Discontent or Uneasiness can touch that Man, who is defended against them by this Armour of Proof; as there is no Peace to the self-condemning Sinner, so there is nothing else to the self-acquitting Righteous; all his Ways, during the Course of this Life, *are Ways of Pleasantness, and all his Paths are Peace;* and when he cometh to finish his Race at the last, *mark the perfect Man, and behold the upright, for the End of that Man is Peace.* What room hath his Breast for any Discontent, where every thing is in a perfect Calm? Let his outward Affairs be ever so discomposed, it is but retiring within himself, and he is out of the reach of all Disturbances: if he is Hungry or Thirsty, or utterly destitute even of the Supports of Nature; yet a good Conscience is a continual Feast, and where that is, there can be no Extremity. What need he care, though he be hated by the

Vol. II. World, who is firmly assured, that he is in favour with his God? How little need he value the Frowns of Men, who feeleth within himself, that he hath the Smiles of Heaven? What can disquiet or cast down his Soul, who is convinced that God is the Light of his Countenance? Let the whole World shake and totter round about it, that Soul whose Basis is a good Conscience, shall remain as unmoveable as the Centre of the Earth: God is its Refuge and its Strength, *a very present help in trouble; therefore shall he not fear though the Earth be removed, and though the Mountains be carried into the midst of the Sea; for the Rivers of the Flood thereof shall make glad the City of our God.* Whilst a guilty Roman Emperor, in the height of human Glory, shall run trembling under a Bed, at the Noise of a Thunderclap; the Man of an upright Heart shall unconcernedly hear it roar, as knowing that the Bolt cannot be levelled at him. *The wicked indeed flieth, when no Man pursueth, but the righteous Man is as bold as a Lion;* because his Heart condemneth him not, therefore hath he Confidence towards his God; and though an unrepublishing Heart be so great a Consolation, yet is he provided by it, of a surer Refuge, even God, who is greater than

than his Heart. The Spirit of Conso-  
lation maketh that Heart his Temple, Serm. XVI.  
which hath nothing wherewith to re-  
proach its happy Owner; and solaceth  
his Soul with the blessed Entertainments  
of Righteousness and Peace, and Joy in  
the Holy Ghost. As then an evil Con-  
science, that never-dying Worm, begin-  
neth here our early Hell, with its perpe-  
tual Gnawings; so a good Conscience is  
Heaven on this side of the Grave, and  
an Antepast of those Joys, which shall  
one day be revealed.

AND now having taken this distinct  
View both of the Miseries of the one  
State, and the Advantages of the other;  
we must needs think it worth our while  
to consider,

III. My third General; in which I am  
to lay down some Rules and Directions,  
whereby we may be able to secure our  
selves against these inward Reproaches  
of the Heart; and,

I. IF we would avoid these inward  
Reproaches of the Heart, we must listen  
to the Advice and Counsel which it  
giveth us. He that pursueth the Dictates  
of his Conscience, and acteth according to  
the Method which that prescribeth, will  
find it passing Judgment always in his



Vol. II. Favour, and will consequently be free from its inward Reproachings. If, before we enter upon any Action, we allow our selves time to examine and consider what our Conscience directeth us to do in such a Case, and determine our Actions by its Resolutions; that can have nothing afterwards to object against us, since our Proceedings have been authorized by its own Consent and Suffrage. And though we should labour under the great Disadvantage of being misinformed by an erroneous Conscience; yet our Guide cannot quarrel with us, for taking the Road it sheweth us, however unhappily it may mislead us from our Journey's end; it is true indeed we cannot avoid the Guilt of an ill Action by obeying the Dictates of a Conscience that misguideth us; but by complying with its Directions we are at least secured from one part of our Punishment, the Upbraidings of our Heart: for our Conscience being biassed by some sort of Prejudice, and thereby incapacitated to judge as it ought; cannot accuse us for the Commission of those Faults which it alloweth of, because it supposeth its own Maxims to be true. But,

2. IN order to be free from the Reproaches of the Heart, we must take notice

rice of its Reproofs and Admonitions. Our Conscience doth not presently upbraid and terrify us, for every little failing and transgression of our Duty, but mildly putteth us in mind of it, and smiteth us friendly; such precious Balms as these do not break the Head, they only caution us to stop, and not run into gross Enormities: The Heart is in this Case a kind Remembrancer, that giveth us a charitable *Memento* of the Obligations we lie under; and if we are thus wrought upon by its reproving us as a Friend, it will never proceed farther, to reproach us as an Enemy. Thus *David's* Heart is said to smite him, when he cut off the Skirt of *Saul's* Garment; that is, it gave him a Caution, at all times after, to be tender of the Safety of the Lord's Anointed; but it could not reproach him for any thing of Guilt, because he touched not his Person, though it was in his Power to have slain him. These are like the fraternal Corrections of some bosome Friend, and are expressive of Affection, not of Enmity; and these marks of Kindness must be first abused and disregarded, before the Heart will betake it self to the Upbraidings of an Adversary.

3. IN order to our freedom from these Reproaches of the Heart, we must con-

Vol. II. sider it as a Witness of all our Actions. We may conceal our evil Deeds from the Sight of Men; and we may carry our Impieties to such a Height, as even to say, *Tush, God regardeth it not*; but we cannot hope to hide our Transgressions from the Eye of our Mind, our Conscience must be privy to all our Performances: and how justly then may that reproach us for the Disrespect we shew to it, if we dare commit those things within its View and Cognifance, which we should be ashamed to act before our sinful Associates? Besides, this will be as good as a thousand Evidences, to convict us of the Guilt of our most private Offences; and according to the Testimony which that giveth of us, we shall be acquitted, or condemned, at the great Tribunal. If then we have such an Awe for this inward Witness, as to give it no occasion to testify against us; we shall also be secure against its private Lashings, and exempted from the Uneasiness of its secret Reproaches. But,

4. THAT we may not be liable to the Reproaches of the Heart, let us make it our Acquaintance and Companion, frequently and soberly communing with it in private, and seeing how Matters stand between that and us. Some Men never allow



allow themselves the time to think seriously; they live always from home, and their Thoughts are still wandering: they never care to look into the Records of their Conscience, or to survey what that hath registered, either for them, or against them; and by this Means the Account is swelled very high, before they have come to any Reckoning; and so the Heart, which would only have advised and counselled them, or at most but admonished and reprov'd them, if they had given ear in time to its Solicitations, is soured and exasperated by this Neglect, and thereby disposed to upbraid and to revile them: whereas if we would keep up a friendly Correspondence, if we would converse with our Heart frequently and familiarly, we might probably be inclined to correct our Failings, by the friendly Caution which that would give us; and thereby avoid those gross and habitual Impieties, which only can expose us to its severe Reproaches; and no Time is more proper for such a Scrutiny as this, no Occasion calleth more upon us to look into our selves, than when we are about to participate of that Sacrament, whose first Rule is, *Let a Man examine himself, and so let him eat*: an Employment so indispensibly preparatory to this Duty, that I hope none  
who

Serm.

XVI.

Vol. II. who design to appear at the Lord's Table, have omitted this Method of Self-examination, for arming themselves against these inward Reproaches of the Heart. And certainly nothing can better secure us for the future from the Stings and Upbraidings of an accusing Conscience, than a frequent Attendance upon these holy Mysteries; by which we may be confirmed in our good Resolutions, and enabled to go on from Strength to Strength, till we get such a Mastery over all our Affections, as that our Will may be subdued unto the Will of our God; and we may boldly affirm with the Patriarch in the Text, out of a modest Sense of our own Sincerity, *That our Heart shall not reproach us so long as we live.*

*Now to God the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, be ascribed all Honour, Power, Might, Majesty, and Dominion, henceforth and for evermore. Amen.*



SERMON



# SERMON XVII.

Gratitude a just Debt for  
Mercies received.

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St. LUKE xvii. latter Part of Ver. 17.

*Were there not Ten cleansed? But  
where are the Nine?*

**O**UR Saviour, we are told in Serm.  
XVII.  
the Eleventh Verse of this  
Chapter, being on his Journey  
to *Jerusalem*, that he might  
be present there at the Feast of Taberna-  
cles (as we may gather from the second  
Verse of the seventh Chapter of St. *John*)  
was obliged to pass through the midst of  
Sa.



Vol. II. *Samaria* and *Galilee* : and as he was entering into a certain Village, that is, when he was near to the Town, but not gone into it, ten Men met him that were Lepers; who by reason of their Unclean-ness could not be admitted into the Place, and who for the same Reason kept at a Distance from him and his Disciples. These, we may suppose, were united by the same common Calamity; since One of them appeareth to have been a *Samaritan*, with whom the *Jews* had no Dealing, or Conversation; and they had probably agreed to meet *Jesus* in his Way; and with their joint Entreaties and Lamentation to solícite his Compassion, and implore his Clemency for the Cure of that Disease, under which they laboured. We find them therefore raising their Voices at his Approach, both by reason of the Distance which they were obliged to keep, and to express the Earnestness of their Desire to be relieved; unanimously saluting him with the Title of *Jesus, Master*; and petitioning him to have Mercy upon them, and free them from the Unclean-ness of their foul Distemper. Their Request is granted as soon as heard; and our Saviour, who *came not to destroy the Law, but to fulfil it*, commandeth them to go and shew themselves to

to the Priests, according to the Directions in *Leviticus* xiv. that by them they might legally be pronounced clean. To this they all paid a ready Obedience; and it came to pass that as they went, probably in the first minute of their Motion, with Joy and Surprize they found that they were cleansed, that their Pollution was done away, and they became as whole and sound as ever. One of them upon this, who was a *Samaritan*, whilst the others, transported with their Cure, but wholly unmindful of their Benefactor, hastened to the Priests, impatient, as we may judge, to be declared clean, and re-admitted into the Society of such as were so; One of them, I say, and but One, reflecting upon the Benefit which he had received, and the Gratitude which so great a Favour justly challenged; turneth back, and glorifieth God with as loud a Voice, as he had formerly implored the divine Mercy: instead of veiling his Face, as before, he now falleth down prostrate upon it; and that no longer at a Distance from his sacred Physician, but at his Feet; being privileged by his Cure to make those near Approaches: In this humble Posture he payeth his grateful Acknowledgments, and returneth due Thanks to the Author of his Health. The Holy  
*Jesus,*

Vol. II. *Jesus*, well pleased to see his devout Gratitude, and the rather as coming from a *Samaritan*, upbraideth the Unthankfulness of the other Nine, who had received an equal Favour; and who being *Jews*, should rather have acknowledged it from one of their own Nation: But they neglecting him who had done so great Things for them, as if the Tythe had been enough to return to God (who though he graciously accepteth of it in our Goods, will never do so in our Persons) let him go back singly to give Thanks, whom they had all accompanied to implore the Mercy. Upon which our Blessed Saviour, to expose their Unthankfulness, demandeth if there were not Ten Men cleansed? and methinks I see him casting his Eyes round, to satisfy himself if they were not coming towards him; but knowing they were so many, and being disappointed of their appearance, he addeth immediately this severe Expostulation, *But where are the Nine?* Where should they be indeed, but with this *Samaritan*, at the Feet of their Deliverer, rendring Thanks for his Benefits? and where-ever they are, they are guilty of Ingratitude; and infamously branded with it, by this cutting Question, *But where are the Nine?*

WHICH



WHICH Words being a Reprehension Serm.  
of the Nine Lepers, for their want of XVII.  
Gratitude on so signal an Occasion, con-  
tain this Lesson for all Christians (being  
as all Scriptures are, written for our In-  
struction) that God requireth and ex-  
pecteth at our hands a suitable Sense and  
Acknowledgment of his Benefits, as far as  
we are capable to express them ; and that  
our neglect of making this return will be  
inquired into, and punished with the ut-  
most Severity.

IN handling which Subject I shall do  
these five Things :

I. I SHALL shew how ready we all are,  
when any pressing Calamity lieth  
upon us, to apply our selves to God  
for Comfort and Relief.

II. I SHALL consider God's Willing-  
ness to assist us, and to release us  
from any Miseries under which we  
may labour.

III. I SHALL examine the undue Re-  
turns which we generally make for  
such Mercies received ; in not being  
sufficiently grateful to our Almighty  
Benefactor.

IV. I SHALL enquire into the Baseness  
and Danger of so scandalous and in-  
grateful a Proceeding: And,

Vol. II. V. I SHALL examine how we ought to  
shew our Gratitude for the Favours,  
which at any time we receive at  
God's Hands.

I. THEN I shall shew how ready we  
all are, when any pressing Calamity lieth  
upon us, to apply our selves to God for  
Comfort and Relief.

HOWEVER stupidly or insensibly we  
may manage our selves in the Possession  
of those Blessings which we enjoy ; how  
little soever we may be disposed to look  
up with due regard to the Hand that  
dispenseth them ; yet are we touched suf-  
ficiently with the Want or the Loss of  
them, and we can be sensibly enough af-  
fected upon such Occasions. Then,  
though before we were forgetful of God,  
and had not him in all our Thoughts ;  
we can betake our selves to him for Com-  
fort and Redress, and can acknowledge  
him to be the God of Consolation. This  
is a good Effect which Afflictions and Ca-  
lamities seldom fail to have upon those  
who are exercised by them ; they are ef-  
fectually convinced of their own Inabili-  
ty to extricate themselves out of such  
Necessities ; and thereby are inclined to  
fix their Dependence upon God, who is  
both able and willing to relieve them.  
When

When *Manasseh* sat upon his Father's Serm. Throne, surrounded with Plenty and **XVII.** Prosperity, he did that which was evil ~~~~~ in the Sight of the Lord, according to all the Abominations of the Heathen : But when he was bound with Fetters, and imprisoned in *Babylon* ; he besought the Lord his God in his Affliction, and humbled himself greatly before the God of his Fathers. Though *Ahab* sold himself to do Wickedness in the Sight of the Lord, more than all the Kings of *Israel* which went before him ; yet when the Judgments of God were denounced by his Prophet, he rent his Clothes, and put Sackcloth upon his Flesh, and fasted and lay in Sackcloth. When *Nebuchadnezzar* surveyed with Pride the great City *Babylon* which he had built ; he vainly boasted that it had been done by the Might of his Power, and for the Honour of his Majesty : But when he was driven to live with Beasts, and his Body was wet with the Dew of Heaven, his Understanding returned to him, and he blessed the most High, and praised and honoured him that liveth for ever. Thus we see how the hardest Hearts are softened and melted down in the Furnace of Adversity ; and the most earthy, the most drossy Tempers, are purified from the Ore by that fiery Trial. For the

E great



Vol. II. great Principle of Self-love, which is  
 ~~~~~ interwoven with our very Being, naturally putteth us upon using the best Means we can to extricate our selves out of those Difficulties which at any time beset us. And therefore it was but a piece of Sophistry, which was made use of in *Job's* Case by the Father of Lyes, *Put forth thy Hand, and touch his Bone and his Flesh, and he will curse thee to thy Face:* Such a Condition as he was then reduced to, being more apt to engage us in Prayers than Curses; to send us to God for Assistance by our Petitions, than to exasperate him against us by our Imprecations. How many are roused, by such awaking Providences, from a Lethargy, which else would have been unto Death? How many are thus put in mind of their Duty to their Creator, who would otherwise have lived as without God in this World? and how much do we all stand in need of such Remembrancers, to give us a charitable *Memento* of our indigent Condition, and force us to address our selves to our Almighty Benefactor? And indeed it is abundantly necessary, that we should be thus exposed to Miseries and Afflictions, to give us a due Knowledge both of God and our selves: for when we feel no want at home,

home, we are not apt to think we need Serm.
 any Assistance from abroad : but if our XVII.
 Endeavours are defeated, and our Ex-
 pectations disappointed, and we cannot
 ascribe it to any visible Cause ; we are
 then constrained to look upwards, in our
 own despight, to that invifible Agent
 who standeth behind the Curtain, where
 he manageth the Scenes, and shifteth
 them as he pleaseth : and the natural
 Consequence of fuch an Observation must
 be, the difclaiming all reliance upon our
 felves, or Fellow-creatures, and making
 our Application to God for Relief. And
 he is fuch a Friend, as will never reject
 us ; as I fhall endeavour to make out,

II. In my fecond Proposition ; in which
 I am to confider God's Willingnefs to af-
 fift us, and to releafe us from any Mife-
 ries under which we may labour.

As there is no Misfortune which can
 befall us in this Life, but that God either
 inflicteth it, or permitteth it ; *Is there
 any Evil in the City* (faith he) *and I have
 not done it ?* fo neither can we be eafed
 from the burthen of our Calamities, but
 by the fame Power which laid on the
 Load ; and blessed be God, that this Abi-
 lity is lodged where there is fo good a
 Will to employ it in our Favour ! For

Vol. II. when God giveth us leave to call him
Father, he alloweth us to expect all the
Tenderness at his Hands, that is agreeable
to the Character of so dear a Relation.
If then we see Parents according to the
Flesh administering, as far as they are ca-
pable, to the Necessities of their Chil-
dren that call upon them; how can we
imagine that our Heavenly Father should
be backward in assisting his Family when
in want? Certainly if ever he denieth our
Requests, it is because we ask a Stone, or
a Serpent; if ever he delayeth to grant
our Desires, it is when a speedy Compli-
ance would be to our Disadvantage: But
if our Wants are real, and our Petitions
fervent, his paternal Bowels will not
fail to yearn over us; he will surely grant
us our Hearts Desire, and will not deny
us the Request of our Lips. For if we
consider him as our Creator, we cannot
doubt his loving kindness to the curious
Workmanship of his own Hands: if we
reflect upon him as our Redeemer, we
cannot call in question his favourable Re-
gard to those whom he hath purchased at
so valuable a Price; if we acknowledge
him for our Sanctifier, we cannot sup-
pose that he will be unmindful of those
whose Hearts he hath made his Temple.
Thus every Person of the sacred Trinity,
unless

unless we unqualify our selves for the Ex-
 pressions of their Goodness, stand engaged
 by their distinct Offices to support and
 relieve us; twisting together a *threefold*
Cord of Love, which the Wise Man telleth
 us *is not easily to be broken*. And indeed, to
 whom else can we betake our selves with
 assurance of Success? If we depend upon
 any earthly Benefactors, we may often-
 times be reduced to say of some of them,
 as *Job* did of his censorious Friends, who
 upbraided and reviled instead of assisting
 him; that they were but *miserable Com-*
forters; either the Will or the Power being
 often wanting in them, which are so e-
 minently to be met with in our Heavenly
 Benefactor. When Sickness then, or Po-
 verty, or any other Calamity, shall fall
 out to be our Portion in this Vale of Mi-
 sery, we have a sure Refuge to fly to in
 all Extremities; even God the Father of
 our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of
 Mercies, and the *God of all Comfort*;
who comforteth us in all our Tribulation,
 as the Apostle informeth us in his second
 Epistle to the *Corinthians*. Thus when-
 ever there is *Deo dignus Vindice Nodus*, an
 Occasion that calleth for an Assistance more
 than human; we have Θεὸν ἀπὸ μηχανῆς,
 the Deity still at hand, to work for us a
 Deliverance worthy of God. But though

Vol. II. we are oftentimes fit Objects enough of that divine Goodness which waiteth to be exercised, by the greatness of our Wants, and the eagerness of our Prayers ; and may by this Means prevail upon a merciful God, to answer our Desires, and redress our Grievances ; yet how seldom do we take care, when we have obtained our Ends, to make our after Behaviour suitable to our Obligations ; or to comply with the gracious Design of God's Beneficence, by being truly thankful to the Giver of all good Gifts ? which bringeth me to

III. My third Proposition ; in which I shall examine the undue Returns, which we generally make for the Mercies we receive ; in not being sufficiently grateful to our Almighty Benefactor.

THE Ends which God proposeth in all his Dispensations, however he is pleased to diversify our Affairs, either by Prosperity, or Adversity, are his Glory and our own Good : and when we do not comply with these gracious Intentions, we render the Methods of his Providence, as much as in us lieth, ineffectual. But chiefly, when he hath been showing down Favours with a liberal Hand, and rescuing us from the Pressure of grievous Calamities ; he expecteth and requireth such a
thank-

thankful Acknowledgment, as may give *Serm.*
him the Honour due unto his Name, and *XVII.*
engage us to worship him with holy 
Worship. But how often do we forget
this double Obligation ! instead of glori-
fying this God of Mercies, how apt are
we to ascribe our Safety and Deliverance
to those second Causes, which are only
his Instruments ! either the Wisdom or
the Assistance, the Care or Tenderness of
our worldly Friends ! Thus stopping at
the Creatures, the Channels which con-
vey them ; without ascending to the Cre-
ator, the Fountain from which they flow :
and who enableth and disposeth them to
all those Acts of Kindness, which at any
time they exercise in our behalf : for did
not that Master-wheel set all the rest in
Motion, they would be destitute of the
Power either to will or to do. And as
we are thus but too remiss, in owning
God as the sole Author of all our Deli-
verances ; and thereby rob him of that
Honour of which he is so jealous ; so are
we by consequence proportionably re-
gardless of paying that Obedience which
such Blessings demand. Indeed while we
feel the Smart of the Rod, we are apt
enough to tremble under his avenging
Hand ; and while his Judgments are thus
abroad, the Inhabitants of the Earth will

Vol. II. learn Righteousness: but when he graciously removeth the Scourge, and giveth us any interval of Ease and Tranquillity, we immediately grow forgetful both of Him and our Duty, and stand in need of fresh Afflictions to remind us of them both. What Vows do some make upon a Sick-bed! and what Resolutions of Amendment do they then take up! If God will vouchsafe to restore them to their Health, how do they profess that they will redeem the Time! and employ every Day that shall be added to their Lives, in the Service of that God that mercifully prolongeth them! and yet as soon as their Strength and Vigour is restored, how do they squander away, in Vanity and Gaiety, those pretious Moments which ought to be employed in *working out their Salvation with fear and trembling!* How do others that are encompassed with manifold Calamities, resolve, if God releaseth them out of their Troubles, to walk worthy of the Mercies which they have received! and yet as soon as he is pleased to change the Scene of their Affairs, pervert his Blessings into Instruments of Unrighteousness; and make that which should have been for the Raising of them up, become but an occasion of their greater falling! a Behaviour

haviour so provoking and inexcusable, Serm. XVII.
that it will certainly be attended by a fatal
Issue; and as it is most infamous in the
Practice, so will it be most pernicious in
the Consequences. As will appear by
duly weighing,

~~IN~~ fourth Proposition; in which
I shall enquire into the Baseness and the
Danger of so scandalous and ungrateful
a Proceeding.

NOTHING is more hateful to God than
Ingratitude, nothing is more loudly com-
plained of by him in holy Scripture :
All Day long (saith he) *have I stretched*
forth my Hands unto a disobedient and gain-
saying People, Rom. x. 21. And again,
The Ox knoweth his Owner, and the Ass
his Master's Crib (the brute Beasts have a
Regard for their Benefactor) *but Israel*
doth not know, my People do not consider,
Isaiah i. 3. Now the most considerable
Aggravations of this loathsome Vice are,
when the Favours conferred are of extra-
ordinary Importance, and the Returns ex-
pected of a very easy Nature : But what
can more forcibly exact our Gratitude,
than being rescued from Extremities we
must otherwise have sunk under? How
can we more cheaply discharge this
mighty Debt, than by praising and obey-
ing

Vol. II. ing our munificent Benefactor? Can we be sensible of the Greatness of the Comforts we receive, unless we are willing to express our Sense of them? Or can we ever expect to experience them again, if we let them pass by without suitable Acknowledgment? There is something so mean in the Nature of this Sin, that it is below the Dignity of a Man to commit it; it stigmatizeth him with the Mark and Character of the Devil, who was the first and greatest Instance of this detestable Vice: In a Word, it is the abusing of Love which is *the fulfilling of the Law*; and so may justly be supposed to be a total Breach and Violation of it. *Ingratum si dixeris; omnia dixeris*, call a Man Ingrateful, and you say every thing that is bad of him, was a Maxim amongst Heathens; and it holdeth much stronger amongst us Christians, whose Profession obligeth us more strictly to avoid it. It betrayeth a Temper so base and ungenerous, that it is not to be wrought upon by sweet and gentle Means; and therefore must be forced into a tractable Disposition, by the slavish Method of Stripes and Punishments. It doeth despite to the Spirit of Grace, where that hath abounded to make Sin abound the more; and thereby will turn that Advocate and Comforter

forter into an Impeacher and Tormenter. Serm. XVII.
 Thus doeth this complication of Impie-
 ty carry (as all Sins do) its Sting along
 with it: it is full as dangerous as it is
 scandalous, and exposeth us at once both
 to Infamy and Vengeance. And now we
 have seen how much the Case of most of
 us resembleth that of the Nine unthank-
 ful Lepers: We are all ready with them
 to cry out in our Afflictions, *Jesus, Ma-
 ster, have Mercy on us*; like them we have
 experienced the Willingness of God to
 release us out of the Miseries which at any
 Time oppress us; and too many of us
 with them have willfully neglected to
 make the due Acknowledgments which
 such Mercies call for; and consequently
 lie under the double Imputation both of
 Baseness and Folly for such an Omission.
 Since then the Example of these Nine
 Lepers hath nothing in it that can invite
 us to follow it; let us rather propose to
 our selves the Pattern of the Tenth, and
 regulate our Actions by that commenda-
 ble Standard. In order to which End it
 will be convenient, to enter,

V. UPON the Consideration of my fifth
 and last Proposition; in which I am to
 examine how we ought to shew our Gra-
 titude for the Favours which at any time
 we

Vol. II. we receive at God's Hands. As it is the ready Way to turn Blessings into Curses, or at least to stop the Current of all future Mercies; if we behave our selves unthankfully under the present and the past: so a grateful Return for the Favours we have experienced is the surest Means to sanctify them to us, and to recommend and qualify us for the Reception of fresh ones; and we may draw from the Behaviour of this *Samaritan*, who only turned back to give Glory to God, some very remarkable Observations, which may be useful to us all upon the like Occasion.

1. His Gratitude for his Cure was very speedy; as soon as he saw that he was healed, he turned back immediately to his Benefactor. Delay is very dangerous in such Cases; if we are but coldly affected with them, when Mercies are felt by us under the first conferring, it is not very probable that the Warmth will increase, when we only reflect upon them at a remoter Distance: It is much more likely that the Impression will wear out, if it be not deep enough to extort a present Acknowledgment. And those Blessings which begin in our Indifference, will end infallibly in our Neglect. But,

2. THE Gratitude expressed by this Tenth Leper was Zealous and Publick; for

for with a loud Voice he glorified God. Sermon. Unless the Affections be concerned as well XVII. as the Tongue, our Praises and Thank-givings are but the Sacrifice of Fools; and unless we are willing to publish our Obligations, it looketh as if we were ashamed of being beholden to God: as a superficial Gratitude, where the Mind is unaffected, is as ominous as the Offering of a Beast without a Heart; so a stupid Unconcernedness defeateth their main End, which is the Advancement of God's Glory by the tribute of our Praise. And therefore for any one to conceal a Blessing, and hide, as it were, an Instance of God's loving Kindness, is as if he should put a lighted Candle under a Bushel, and cramp it within a Sphere too narrow for its Activity; whereas this Light ought to shine before Men, that they may glorify our Father which is in Heaven. But,

3. THE Gratitude of this Leper was humble and submissive; for he fell down on his Face at our Saviour's Feet. We must not then be puffed up by the Blessings we receive, or think the better of our selves, because we partake of them: we must not ascribe them to any Merits of our own, but to that Mercy of God which is over all his Works: and we must always take along with us this Consideration,

Vol. II. sideration, that *much is expected from those to whom much is given*; and that our Humility and our Obedience must go Hand in Hand with our Obligations.

4. WE are farther taught by this Example to distinguish rightly between the Objects of our Gratitude; *For he glorified God*, and gave Thanks to our Saviour. Not being fully convinced of our Saviour's Divinity, as indeed it was almost impossible that he should be; he looked upon him however as the blessed Instrument made use of by God for the conveying this great Mercy; and so, though his Gratitude was terminated in God, yet it touched upon the Person through whom it was imparted. We must then, whenever we are rescued from any Trouble, by the Friendship and Assistance of our Fellow-creatures, take Care to pay a just Regard and Deference to those whom God substituteth to act in his stead. For as the Tribute of our Praise must be chiefly paid to him who is a jealous God, as the first supreme Cause of all our Consolation; so is there a subordinate Measure of Respect due also to those whom his Providence maketh choice of, as the Means of administring to us any Comfort or Relief.

AND now to conclude ; if we will be careful to set off our Gratitude, for any Blessings which we receive at the Hand of God, with such Qualifications as the Instance here suggesteth to us ; we shall thereby secure our selves from the severe Reprimand, *Were there not Ten cleansed, but where are the Nine?* and shall share in that Blessing which was pronounced to the Tenth ; *Go in peace, thy Faith hath made thee whole.*

Now to God the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, three Persons, but one God of Mercy, be ascribed all Honour, Power, Might, Majesty, and Dominion, henceforth and for evermore. Amen.



SERMON



SERMON XVIII.

The Nature and Danger of
presumptuous Sins considered.

NUMBERS XV. Verse 30.

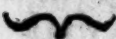
But the Soul that doth ought presumptuously (whether he be born in the Land, or a Stranger) reproacheth the Lord ; and that Soul shall be cut off from among his People.

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WE are generally too apt to flatter our selves unreasonably, in extenuating the Heinousness of our most scandalous Commisions, and in lessening the Apprehensions which

which we may have of their ill Consequences: we turn the wrong end of the *Serm.*
Perspective upon both these Objects; by *XVIII.*
which the Guilt appeareth to us to be
small and inconsiderable, and the Danger
is represented at a very great distance; and
we therefore grow careless in relation to
the former, and are but very little solici-
tous in respect of the latter. Those who
fondly indulge themselves in Notions of
this Nature, will insensibly be led into
the grossest Transgressions; and will pro-
bably add to such other Offences, as the
Infirmity of our Nature too frequently
betrayeth us to, those presumptuous Pro-
vocations committed with a high Hand,
which the unerring Law of God, pro-
nounced by his own Mouth, hath brand-
ed with a Character the most infamous,
and menaced with a Punishment the most
dreadful of any. In the former Part of
this Chapter we have an account of the
Jewish manner of atoning for Sins of
Ignorance, whether such as were commit-
ted by a private Person, or such as diffu-
sed a Guilt over the whole Congregation;
and we find God Almighty so mercifully
inclined towards pardoning those Offences
which proceed from want of Knowledge,
that upon sacrificing a She-goat for a Sin-
offering in the first Case, and upon offer-
F ing

Vol. II.  ing up a Bullock for a Burnt-offering in the other Case, the Priest was to make an Atonement for them, and the Sin was to be forgiven. But notwithstanding his Compassion of our Ignorance and Infirmities, notwithstanding the easy Terms of Reconciliation, which he vouchsafed to accept of in Matters of that Nature; such an abhorrence he hath for willful Disobedience, so sensibly is he offended at a deliberate Affront; that *the Soul which doth ought presumptuously, and sinneth with an high Hand*, is doomed to be cut off from amongst his People. It is true indeed, that God, whose Mercy is over all his Works, did sometimes recede from the rigour of this Sentence, and not execute it according to the utmost Severity (as in the Case of *David* in relation to *Uriah*) but this was an Indulgence beyond the Letter of the Law, and which the *Jews* had no reason to expect or depend upon. It is also true that the Christian Covenant, which is that of Grace, hath better Assurances of Mercy and Forgiveness; and therefore though our Sins may be highly presumptuous, yet we ought not wholly to despair of Pardon; since a true Repentance is such a sovereign Antidote, as will expel any Poison the most dangerous and deadly, and restore us to a State of Health.

Health and Safety; but then, as there are *Serm.*
degrees of Sinning, so are there propor- *XVIII.*
tionable Severities to be undergone by the Penitent; and when we are dead in Trespases of a blacker Dye than ordinary, the convulsive Pangs of the new Birth must be sharper and stronger than in other Cases; and our being restored to Favour and Forgiveness will depend upon more difficult and laborious Conditions. For though we are not liable, as the *Jews* were, to be immediately cut off from amongst our People; yet if we sin presumptuously, and go on in it impenitently, our Circumstances will be as much more miserable than theirs, as our Advantages and Ingratitude will appear to be greater.

IN order to deter you from so dangerous a Proceeding, I shall, in my Discourse upon the present Occasion, insist upon the three following Propositions:

- I. I SHALL enquire into the Nature of Presumption, and endeavour to explain to you wherein it doeth consist.
- II. I SHALL shew you both the Malignity and the Danger of such Offences as are done presumptuously; and,

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III. I SHALL lay down some Cautions and Directions, by which we may be enabled to avoid those Practices, whose Guilt is so heinous, and whose Punishment is so dreadful.

I. I shall enquire into the Nature of Presumption, and endeavour to explain to you wherein it doeth consist.

WE may all be guilty of Presumption, if we take the Notion of it in the largest Sense; not only by depending too much upon our selves, but also by depending unwarrantably upon God himself. Who-soever pretendeth to trust in his Mercy, or to rely upon his Power, without the grounds of a Promise, presumeth farther than he ought; and though he may call it by some better Name, as Faith, or Hope, or Affiance in God; yet is it no better than a downright Presumption: such was the Presumption of the Sons of *Sceva*, who, without any Commission from our Saviour, as his Apostles had, took upon them to call over those that had evil Spirits, the Name of the Lord *Jesus*, in form of an Adjuration: and all those who expose themselves to unnecessary Dangers and Temptations, expecting that God should work a Miracle for their Preservation; all such as go on in a sinful

ful course of Life, and yet hope to find Sermon. Mercy at the Hour of Death ; all such as XVIII. promise to themselves the End without the Means, Learning without Study, Wealth without Industry, Heaven without Piety, and such like ; for as much as their Expectations are groundless and unwarrantable, they are guilty of Presumption in its largest Acceptation. But as the Word *Presumption* is generally used in Scripture, it is taken in a more narrow and contracted Signification ; and doeth not import any distinct sort of Sin ; but only such a common accidental Difference, as may adhere to Sins of any kind whatsoever. For as Zeal cannot be said to be any peculiar Virtue ; but only a Quality founded upon our Love of God, which enhanceth the Value of our devout Performances ; so neither is Presumption any particular Vice ; but an odious Qualification springing from our Hatred of God, which aggravateth the Guilt of every Transgression.

THE usual and complete distribution of Sins is into those of *Ignorance*, *Infirmity*, and *Presumption* ; and the ground of this Distinction is laid in the Soul of Man ; in which there are three principal Faculties, from whence all our Actions derive their Original ; the Understanding, the

Vol. II. Will, and the sensual Appetite; if nothing were amiss in any of these, all our Actions which flow from them would be innocent and unblameable; but in our miserable State of Corruption and Degeneracy, the whole Soul is out of frame, and all the Faculties of it are depraved; much Blindness and Error is in the Understanding, much Rashness and Impetuosity in the Affections, much Stubbornness and Perverseness in the Will; which occasion our whole Lives to be filled with nothing but Mistakes or Weaknesses, or open Disobedience: and it cometh to pass, by reason of the joint Concurrence of these three Faculties in their Operations, that in most sinful Actions there is a Mixture of them all; upon which account all Sins are stiled indifferently in the Scriptures, sometimes Errors, sometimes Infirmities, and sometimes Rebellions: but when we would speak of them more nicely and exactly, so as to distinguish them one from another, and give them their proper Character and Name; the Enquiry must be where the Fault lay most chiefly, and from thence the Sin must take its right Denomination.

If then the Understanding be most in fault; either not thoroughly apprehending the Good which it ought, or else not en-

entertaining a right Notion of it ; the Serm.
Transgression so committed (though pro- XVIII.
bably it may have something in it both of ~~~~~
Infirmity and Presumption) yet is properly to be stiled a Sin of Ignorance.

IF the main Fault be in the Affections, through some sudden violent Passion of the Mind ; our Joy, our Fear, our Anger, or the like, blinding the Judgment, and not suffering it to act freely ; though the Offence may possibly have something in it both of Ignorance and Presumption too, yet is it properly to be called a Sin of Infirmity.

BUT if the Understanding be competently informed, and the Affections not hurried on by any sudden Temptation ; the Trespas must then necessarily arise from the Will, which is perverse and resolute in its Choice : and any Sin whatever occasioned by such Willfulness (though possibly too, not altogether destitute of Ignorance and Infirmity) is yet properly to be looked upon as a Sin of Presumption.

To sum up all this in a few Words ; when a Man is convinced in his Understanding, that the Thing he would do is unlawful and displeasing to God, or at least hath sufficient Means to convince himself of it ; and when besides he is not

Vol. II, blinded by any violent Passion, but hath
time and leisure to advise with himself,
to examine the Case, and all its Circum-
stances, and apply to it that Light which
he hath in his Understanding; and yet
when all this is done, resolveth, contrary
to the Dictates of his Reason, and the
Checks of his Conscience, to put his
wicked Intentions into act; and fullfil his
own Will, notwithstanding its apparent
Inconformity to the Will of God; this is
a willful and desperate Sin of Presump-
tion, which enhanceth our Guilt to a
very high degree, and maketh any such
Commission become a fearful Provoca-
tion. For let us not flatter and deceive
our selves, in relation to such Sins as
seem small and excusable, as if they
could never arrive to be presumptuous Of-
fences, for certainly if they are done in
the aforesaid manner, however small they
may appear, materially taken, and in their
own Nature; yet accompanied with these
Circumstances of Aggravation, they a-
mount formally to Sins of Presumption:
Nay, to carry the Notion a little farther;
it many times happeneth that these minu-
ter Failings and more common Trans-
gressions, are more purely presumptuous
than any other; because they seldom
have any other Motive either of Ignorance,

rance, or Infirmary, to promote their Sermon, Commission; since we cannot suppose our XVIII. Knowledge so barren, as not to direct us in such usual Instances; and it is seldom that our Appetites are very craving, when the Object is of little Moment or Consideration; and where neither of these Excuses can be alledged, we must conclude the Sin to be a high Presumption.

To make this more clear, I shall instance in that universal Sin of common Swearing, which you have heard this Day discountenanced by the Government: and which, though much disregarded upon account of its Frequency, is yet justly to be ranked amongst presumptuous Transgressions: It can have no Plea of Infirmary to extenuate it, since it is an Action in which human Nature is not obnoxious to the least Temptation, arising from any Motion of the sensitive Appetite; it is an insipid and unsavoury sort of Transgression, which hath no pretence either to Pleasure or Profit; and if it partaketh of neither of these, it can have no dependence upon the Affections; and therefore cannot be stiled a Sin of Weakness. Again, it cannot plead the Excuse of Ignorance; since no Man, who pretendeth to the Name of a Christian, can disavow his having heard of the Third Commandment, or our Saviour's

I

Vol. II. viour's Prohibition of unprofitable Swearing; besides the many repeated Proclamations to this purpose, which have declared it a Transgression, and forbidden it as such: it must therefore be resolved into the third Division of Sins, Sins of Presumption committed with a high Hand; which are only the Product of a rebellious Obstinacy, and the pernicious Effects of a willful Disobedience.

AND thus much shall suffice for the first Particular to be enquired into, namely, the Nature of Presumption, and wherein it may be said most properly to consist; it is a Provocation that proceedeth not from any Error in the Understanding, nor from the Violence of a sudden Passion, but from a resolute Perverseness of the Will; which will gratify it self in contempt of God's Authority, and in spite of those Restrictions which he hath laid upon us. I proceed,

II. To shew you the Malignity and the Danger of such Offences as are done presumptuously.

THE Text telleth us, that *the presumptuous Sinner reproacheth the Lord*, he casteth upon him the greatest Contempt imaginable; because he utterly rejecteth his just Authority, and professeth that he
will

will not have him to reign over him. *Serm.*
 The Word which our Translation rendereth *XVIII.*
reproacheth the Lord, is in the Septuagint
 Version *παροξύνει*, *exasperateth* or *provo-*
keth the Lord; as we find it expounded
 in the large Description of Charity, given
 us by the Apostle, in Chap. xiii. of the
 first Epistle to the *Corinthians*, *Charity*
 (saith he) *ὁὐ παροξύνεται*, *is not easily pro-*
voked: a *Paroxysme*, which is a Word de-
 rived from this Original, signifieth the
biggest and *most violent fit* of a Fever;
 and when the Sense of it is transferred
 from the Body to the Mind, it denoteth
 the greatest Violence of Anger, which is
 the Fever of the Soul; and therefore when
 it is here said that *the Soul that doth ought*
presumptuously *παροξύνει τὸν Κύριον*, we
 must understand that such an Offence
 provoketh God to as high a Pitch of In-
 dignation as it is possible for him to con-
 ceive against us: for indeed it is directly
 a Sin like that of the Devil, who offend-
 eth against God out of Malice and De-
 sign; offendeth purposely, that he may
 offend, and maketh the Desire of sinning
 and transgressing, the chief Inducement
 to his accomplishing the Sin. This is
 strictly true in Sins of pure Presumption;
 and is proportionably so in those of a mixt
 Nature, which though they do not swell

Vol. II. altogether so high, yet have a killing
~~~~~ Guilt, and pernicious Consequences ;  
~~~~~ leaving a Stain behind them, that will  
very hardly be washed out. For it is the
Will that carrieth the chief Stroke in all
moral Actions, to render them good or
bad, commendable or blameable : and
although there are many considerable
Circumstances, of Time, Place, and Per-
sons, and the like ; which either enhance
or extenuate Offences, as they stand com-
pared with one another ; yet the Consent of
the Will is of so much greater Importance
than all the rest, that every Sin is reckon-
ed so much more or less heinous, by how
much it appeareth to be more or less vo-
luntary : since therefore in Sins of Igno-
rance and Infirmitie there is less Willful-
ness, the Will being misled in the one by
an Error in the Judgment, and trans-
ported in the other by the Violence of
some Passion ; and since in Sins of Pre-
sumption there is a greater Willfulness ;
when the Will, neither wanting Infor-
mation nor Leisure to resolve better, yet
knowingly and advisedly determineth to
do evil, it will necessarily follow, that
presumptuous Sins are by far the greatest,
and involve us in a Guilt the most black
and dismal ; the Will being abundantly
and beyond Measure willful, maketh the
Sin

Sin be abundantly and beyond Measure. Serm. XVIII.
sinful. Thus you see, how great the Malignity of presumptuous Sins is; and since it is the Property of infinite Justice to proportion its Punishments to the Degree of the Offence; we cannot but suppose that these enormous Transgressions will expose us to such Dangers as are very terrible. The Danger which was incurred by them under the old Law, was (as it is contained in the Words of my Text) that the presumptuous Offender should be cut off from the Congregation; and under the new Covenant the Danger is this, that he runneth an extream hazard of utter excision: for even under the Gospel, and all its gracious Privileges, without Repentance there can be no Remission; whatever Sin therefore endangereth our Repentance, doeth consequently lay us open to the greatest Peril: Now such is the Nature of presumptuous Sins, that whoever committeth them runneth a very great hazard, that he shall never be able sufficiently to repent of them. For as in order to the Cure of any bodily Distemper, the Remedy administred must, in Strength and Quantity, be equal to the Quality and Malignity of the Disease; so to cleanse the Soul from these grosser Pollutions, and to restore it again to its
former

Vol. II. former Innocence; will require a more regular and solemn Course of Penitence; than in atoning for Offences of a more ordinary Nature; it will exact more Sighs, more Tears, more Revenge, more Indignation; there must be a stronger Infusion of all those sovereign Ingredients prescribed by St. *Paul* to the *Corinthians*; before any comfortable hope can be entertained, that God hath pardoned the Sin, and blotted out the Transgression. It is indeed an Instance of God's unspeakable Mercy; to those who have willingly suffered so unclean a Spirit to enter in and take possession of their Souls, if they are ever enabled to cast him out again; but however, as our Saviour declared of some Devils, *This kind goeth not out but by Fasting and Prayer*: much Endeavour, much Resistance, much Mortification must be used, to discipline and correct such a stubborn Heart, and reduce it to a right Temper of Submission and Obedience: and if we consider how averse we are to all such Offices of Self-revenge, and Self-denial, we cannot but acknowledge that we are very much in danger never to repent of them so thoroughly as we should. We shall be further confirmed in this Opinion, if we consider a Prayer of the Prophet *David*, which he earnestly putteth up

up against these kind of Transgressions. *Serm.*
Keep back (saith he) thy Servant from XVIII
presumptuous Sins, let them not have Domi-
nion over me ; then I shall be upright, and
I shall be innocent from the great Trans-
gression. We may observe here how the
 Psalmist hath formed his Petition, in a
 very remarkable and especial manner; he
 had prayed to God in the foregoing Verse,
 to *cleanse him from his secret Faults*, Sins
 (we may imagine) of Ignorance or Infir-
 mity; but he beggeth that he may be en-
 tirely restrained from these; it is not
cleanse, but *keep back* thy Servant from
 such heinous Offences; a more eminent
 Care is taken in relation to presumptuous
 Sins, as if he had an Eye to the Threat-
 ning in my Text, and despaired almost of
 Pardon, if he should be guilty of them:
 Besides he giveth us an Intimation of the
 Tyranny of these Sins; *let them not have*
the Dominion over me; a presumptuous Sin
 worketh a great Alteration in the Soul; it
 advanceth marvellously by a single Act;
 it weakeneth our ghostly Strength, and
 giveth the Tempter a great Advantage,
 even to the hazard of a compleat Con-
 quest: yet farther, he speaketh of the
great Offence, such a final Impenitency,
 and total Apostacy, as cutteth off the
 Offender from all possibility of Pardon;
 and

Vol. II. and he prayeth that *he may be kept back*
from presumptuous Sins, and freed from
their Dominion over him, that he may
be innocent from the great Transgres-
sion; as if these did make some very
near Approaches to that; and as if no
Man could secure himself against that
dreadful Condition, but by keeping out
of the reach of presumptuous Sins. I
may add to all these Considerations, that
allowing God should accept of our Re-
pentance, and free us from the Guilt
which we had contracted; yet he rarely
doeth it without inflicting some very
grievous Punishment upon us in this
Life: I shall only lay before you the Ex-
ample of *David*, who, for the Commis-
sion of one presumptuous Sin, notwith-
standing God's forgiving the Iniquity of
it, as his Pardon was pronounced by the
Prophet *Nathan*, yet had also denounced
to him those bitter Consequences, which
accordingly befel him during the Course
of his Life: he was continually embroil-
ed in Blood, the Sword never departing
from his House all his Days; his Daugh-
ter was defiled by her Brother *Amnon*;
that Brother slain by his Brother *Abolom*;
a strong Conspiracy raised against him by
that Son; his Concubines defiled by him
in the sight of all *Israel*; and himself af-
flicted

licted above Measure, by the untimely Serm. Death of him that was his darling. From XVIII. all which we may collect, that though God's infinite Mercy may incline him to forgive us upon a sincere Repentance, yet without such Repentance it is impossible to be acquitted; the Terms of Reconciliation are very sharp and difficult, and we are seldom so intirely reinstated in his Favour, as to avoid being exercised for it by temporal Afflictions. This is the Malignity, and these are the Dangers of presumptuous sinning; and since no Guilt can be of a deeper Dye, no Hazard of a more dreadful Nature; it will be every one's Interest to stand upon their Guard, against a Transgression so heinous and so destructive. I therefore proceed,

III. In the third and last Place, to lay down some Cautions and Directions, by which we may be enabled to avoid those Practices, whose Guilt is so enormous, and whose Punishment is so dreadful; and,

I. LET us endeavour to be Masters of our own Wills, since it is from their Perverseness that all presumptuous Sins arise.

WE value our selves much upon the freedom of our Will, we look upon this as the grand Privilege of a rational Creature;

Vol. II. ture; we sometimes exert this Right unduly against the Dictates of our Reason, and yet suffer it to be enslaved to our sensual Appetites: but be we of good Courage, and let us play the Men; let us endeavour to get such an Ascendant over our Will, as may enable us to bias it to the better side: in order to this, we must sometimes exercise a Jurisdiction over it, and assert a Sovereignty over our own Desires: and though they may not be inordinate, but may be innocently gratified; yet now and then to deny them is prudent and necessary: for he that doeth not sometimes check his Appetite, but giveth it every lawful Entertainment that it requireth, will by this Indulgence teach it to crave on, to be insolent and importunate, and not endure to be resisted: but he that frequently accustometh himself to controul his Will, and doeth not suffer it to be carried away even with innocent Affections; will very hardly be induced to give way to it, in those scandalous Presumptions which are so highly criminal. Had *David* dealt thus by his Son *Adonijah*, he might have prevented the evil Consequences of his fond Indulgence; but when *David* had never checked *Adonijah*, nor did at any time displease him, saying, *Why hast thou done so?* He easily took the Confidence

dence to say, *I will be King*, and was betrayed by that Presumption into unavoidable Destruction. This is one great Benefit which Afflictions bring along with them, and which sanctifieth them to those who are duly exercised by them; by denying even the moderate Use of the Creatures, they cut off all possibility of abusing them immoderately: if therefore we would do that out of choice in Prosperity, which we are necessitated to do in the Days of Adversity; we might so govern our Wills as to make them choose rightly, and avoid all danger of falling into Sins of Presumption.

It is recorded of one of the *Turkish* Emperors, when his Soldiers murmured at his effeminate Disposition, in stopping the Progress of his Arms out of love to a fair *Grecian* that was his Captive; that he sent for her to appear before his Council of War; and when all had confessed (being ravished with her Beauty) that he had a just Excuse for his extraordinary Passion; to shew how much his Soul was superior to theirs, he beheaded her with his own Hand, and commanded his Army to march instantly. The Act was barbarous, and a Barbarian did it, yet may it afford a good Moral for the Practice of a Christian, who ought to mortify and cut

Vol. II. off his dearest Lusts, when they would obstruct that Warfare which he is obliged to prosecute. But,

2. LET us watch against every Appearance of Evil, and not suffer Sin to get any ground upon us; because it will be apt to increase upon us by degrees; and by thus contemning these small Things, we shall come to fall by little and little.

WHEN Sin so far insinuateth it self into our Affections, as to get any manner of Advantage over us, it will lay fresh Obligations upon us of doing Evil; thus one Sin layeth a Stumbling-block in our Way, and becometh a forcible and almost irresistible Motive to another, till we go on to fill up the *Measure of our Iniquity*. We have a lamentable Instance of this in the Royal Prophet; who having given way to his irregular Desires, and indulged his Appetite in dishonouring *Bathsheba*, was put to the meanest Shifts, that he might disguise it from the Husband; and not succeeding in his less guilty Contrivances, goeth on without Remorse to take away his Life, and killeth him with the Sword of the Children of *Ammon*; and thus Adultery became the Parent of Murther, that Murther might be made the Cloak of his Adultery. The like sad Instance we find in the Patriarch *Jacob*,
when

when he deceived his Father, and robbed Serm.
his Brother of the Blessing; Falsities XVIII.
multiply upon him almost as fast as Words; whilst every following Untruth
deriveth its Malignity, and hath its Dependence upon the original Lye; as a
poisoned Fountain breaketh out into many Rivulets, and yet all participate of the
Venom of their Spring. It is therefore absolutely necessary for all those, who
resolve to secure themselves against presumptuous Sins, carefully to watch
against the beginnings of Impiety; and never to give any admittance to
those Inmates, which are easier kept abroad, than they are turned out of Possession. But,

3. LASTLY, Let us be chiefly careful not to listen to the Tempter, in any such fond Notions as may minister to our Security.

HE is apt to whisper pleasing Imaginations to our Souls, and addresseth himself differently to the Wicked and the Virtuous, with the same ill Design of lulling both into a Lethargy. He persuadeth the Unregenerate, that the Way to Heaven is not so narrow as Men would make it; that the Gate is not so strait but that Multitudes may go through it, three Thousand being added to the Church by

Vol. II, one Sermon, and four Thousand by another, in which many were included perhaps worse than himself; that it were Uncharitableness towards God and Man, to think so many Millions were created to be damned; or that the flaming Sword still kept the Entrance of Paradise, since the *Woman's Seed had broken the Serpent's Head*; and then the Consequence which he draweth from these Premises is this, that a Man may be saved without any great Labour, and that we need not employ much Pains or Time about it. To the Good and Virtuous he endeavoureth to suggest, that his great Work is done already, that he is in a State of Grace, and cannot but continue in it; the Tree hath taken Root, and it must flourish; the Seed of God reigneth in him that he cannot sin, or if he can and doeth, God will not mark it, *he seeth no Sin in Jacob, nor Transgression in Israel*. Thus would he incline him to stop in the middle of his Course, by persuading him he is already at his Journey's end; and endeavoureth to cut him off from his heavenly Inheritance, by possessing him with an Opinion that his Tenure is indefeasible. But this is only leading him up to the Top of the Hill, that he may with the greater Force

pre-

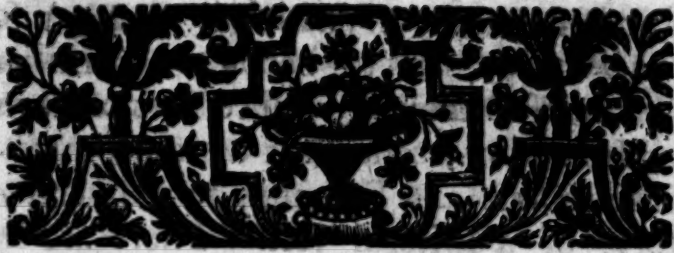
precipitate him downward, and the higher the Elevation is, the greater will be the Fall. But let the first of these consider the Advice of the Apostle, that they should *work out their Salvation with fear and trembling*; and let the other attend to what he declareth of himself, *Brethren, I count not my self to have apprehended; but this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press towards the Mark, for the Prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus*: and to conclude, let them both, and all of us consider, that more are ruined by Presumption than Despair, because we are apter to hope than to fear without grounds. If Diffidence on the one side, like an ordinary Champion, hath here and there destroyed a few, Confidence on the other side (with *Saul* and *David*) hath slain its Thousands and ten Thousands; and most of those who go down to the Chambers of Hell, pass thither through the lofty Gates of Presumption. From which desperate Sin and its most dismal Consequences, God of his infinite Mercy deliver us all, through the Merits and Mediation of our blessed Saviour;



*To whom with the Father, and the
Holy Spirit, be ascribed all Honour,
Power, Might, Majesty, and Domi-
nion, henceforth and for evermore.
Amen,*



SERMON



SERMON XIX.

Speaking of Truth a religious and moral Duty.

EPHES. iv. Part of Verse 25.

Wherefore putting away Lying, speak every Man Truth with his Neighbour.



THESE Words are immediately designed to dissuade us from the particular Vice of Lying, a Sin in Nature as vile, and yet in Practice as common, as any other which hath prevailed amongst Men; a Sin so very infamous, that even the Re-

Serm.
XIX.

Vol. II. Reproach thereof is esteemed an Affront
 not to be expiated without Blood and
 Murder; and yet (which is strange) so
 frequent too, as to become a familiar
 Theme of Discourse; a sure Test of Parts
 and Invention; and that which commu-
 nicateth Salt and Poinancy to a divertive
 Story, or a spiteful Jest. There are in
 some Men innate Principles, which
 strongly incline them to this Offence; ;
 eager Appetites of sensual Enjoyments,
 impetuous Anger and Displeasure, Envy
 and vitious Emulation, excessive Self-
 love, and unaccountable Maliciousness:
 these prompt Men to Lying, as a fit En-
 gine to promote their Ends; to supplant
 Competitors in Credit or in Interest, to
 satisfy their uneasy Tempers, or to dis-
 charge their prevailing Passions: But
 there are also in this Age more special
 Causes of the Growth and Increase of
 this spreading Sin: there are implacable
 Dissensions sprung up, and fierce Animo-
 sities, the fruitful Parents of Lyes; these
 seem to run through all sorts and degrees
 of Men, and set them upon framing and
 confidently venting false Stories, and ill-
 grounded Reports: From which, and
 such like Sources, it is no wonder, that
 this Flood of Lying should so generally
 overflow; that the natural Design of
 Con-

Conversation seemeth to be forgotten and destroyed ; and Speech no longer conveyeth the Sense of our Hearts, is no longer the Picture of our Thoughts, and faithful Interpreter of our Minds; but laying aside plain Truth and Sincerity, the only Ornaments designed for it by Nature, it putteth on false Artifices to deceive ; it is taught to paint and wear Disguises, and like the Hand of a false Clock, it scarce ever pointeth at the true Notions and Intentions of the Heart ; but is calculated to beguile the Simple and lead them astray, to manage Revenge with Subtilty, and to cover Treachery with Smiles and Flowers. The State of Things then being so very corrupt as to this Particular, what Advice can be given more seasonable, or useful, than that of the Apostle in the Words of my Text ; *wherefore putting away Lying, speak every Man Truth with his Neighbour?*

IN my following Discourse upon which Words, I shall insist upon these two Particulars :

I. I SHALL describe the Nature of Lying, and set before you the several Sorts of it.

II. I SHALL offer some convincing Arguments, which may reasonably dissuade you from the Practice of it.

I. THEN



I. THEN I shall describe the Nature of Lying, and set before you the several Sorts of it.

LYING is defined by the Schoolmen from St. *Austin*, *Falsa vocis significatio cum Intentione fallendi*, it is a false Speech, with an Intention, or Design, to impose upon the Hearer; whereby two Conditions appear necessary to its Production;

First, THAT a Man speak otherwise than he thinketh, contrary to his Judgment and Opinion; and so all such are excused, who speak that which is really false, yet believing it to be true; they are guilty of no moral or ethical Lye.

Secondly, THAT it be spoken with a Design to deceive the Hearer; and this removeth the Malignity of all such innocent Raillery and sportive Jest, where the very Tone, the Gesture, and manner of Expression, do effectually secure from any Danger of deceiving, or begetting false Notions in the Minds of the Hearers: upon this Score also all Rhetorical Figures, all Types, and Parables, are not only blameless, because they are offered with no Design to deceive; but also elegant, useful, and commendable, being but different Ways of imparting the Truth.

BUT the true Nature hereof will be better explained, by setting before you the several Sorts of it; and these are usually reckoned to be Three, a pernicious or malicious Lye; an officious or serviceable Lye; and a jocose or merry Lye. Serm. XIX.

I. THE first of these, the pernicious one, is of all the grossest and most mischievous; a direct breach of the Ninth Commandment; *a bearing false Witness against our Neighbour*, and charging him with Faults which he never committed. Thus in the Case of *Naboth*, suborned Sons of *Belial* rose up and said, *that he had blasphemed God and the King*: thus also *Haman* lyed against the People of the *Jews*; and the Elders and Witnesses against our blessed Saviour; and this indeed may properly be called an Imitation of the Devil, nay, a very Assumption of his Nature; being a manifest Complication of two of his vilest Attributes, Malice, and Lying. This is so infamous a Piece of Wickedness, that the most profligate Wretches are ashamed to own it, and all Communities have enacted severe Laws against it; as being a Practice which undermineth the very Foundations of Society and Civil Government. But it is not only in judicial Matters, that we find Men guilty of this gross Enormity; it is justly

Vol. II. justly to be feared that few Societies are free from being haunted with these false Witnesses; who manage their Business indeed more cunningly, but never the less fatally or perniciously; who infect their Discourse with lying Reports, and infamous Surmises; and so instil the Poison of Calumny and Detraction, of Scandal and Dissension, in a private Whisper, in a sly Insinuation, or in a witty but spiteful Remark. But there is another sort of pernicious Lye, which is purely made for Gain and Profit; and doeth not chiefly aim at the Hurt of another, but as it is subservient to their own Advantage; thus for Instance, *Ziba* lyed to *David*, in order to acquire the Lands of *Mephiboseth*. Thus also some infamous and mean spirited Wretches, who have no sense either of Honour or Honesty, by a seeming Compliance and Condescension, work upon the easy Tempers of well-meaning People, to depend upon their dissembled Civility, and so lay themselves open to the most malicious Injuries, by relying upon the false Security of their deceitful Promises. And indeed common Experience convinceth us, that this same Interest hath so powerful an Influence upon the generality of Mankind, as not only to oblige them to sacrifice to

is their Conscience and their Innocence; *Sermon*
but what is usually much dearer to *XIX.*
them, their very Vices and Sensuali-
ties: Truth then is the slightest Tribute
which they pay to Mammon; and down-
right Cheating, carried on by Lyes, is ac-
counted in the common management of
Affairs, only an honest Endeavour of
thriving, or an allowable Artifice in or-
der to grow rich.

2. A SECOND kind of Lyes are called
officious; which in ordinary Repute are
not so bad; as being only contrived to
excuse a Friend, to prevent a Misfortune,
or charitably to conceal or colour a Crime
or Miscarriage: such was the Lye of the
Egyptian Midwives, in behalf of the *Is-*
raelitish Women; and such that of *Ra-*
hab to save the *Hebrew* Spies. But if
Truth be a Justice indispensibly due to
our Neighbours, if no Evil may be done
that Good may come of it; then also
these sort of Lyes, notwithstanding their
specious Pretences, must be criminal.
St. Paul saith, *We should do nothing against*
the Truth; and the *Psalmist* assureth us,
That God will destroy all those (without
distinction) *that speak Lyes*. The Case
hath long ago been resolved by *St. Au-*
stin, that even to save one's Life a Lye is
unlawful; there being no Proportion or
Analogy

Vol. II. Analogy between temporal living, and eternal dying; and the Wise Man informeth us in the most exprefs Terms, *that the Mouth which lyeth slayeth its own Soul.* Doubtless we must think the Primitive Christians to have been as well foolish as unfortunate, in undergoing Tortures and Martyrdoms for the Defence of the Truth; if by so easy a Method as this, they might have reconciled Life and Hypocrisy, Lying and a good Conscience: We find the *Priscillianists* condemned as Hereticks, for justifying that it was lawful to convert one to the Christian Religion by a Lye: for Truth, as it can never need, so it scorneth and loatheth the Patronage of Falshood; it is able to support it self by fair Means; and therefore will not be destroyed under a Pretence of saving it, nor seem to thrive by its own Ruin.

3. A THIRD sort of Lyes are the jocose or merry ones; such as are framed without Malice or much Design, only to cheat our Company into a good Humour, or as an Exercise of quick Invention: but even these also are severely condemned by the Prophet *Hosea*, under the Character of those People, *who make the King glad with their Wickedness, and the Princes with their Lyes.* For Truth is too serious

ous a Thing to trifle with, nor will God Serm.
suffer his holy Commandments to be XIX:
made our Sport; but if we jest away our
Souls by the Breach of them, and like
Fools make a Mock at Sin; he will pu-
nish the Contempt in earnest, and make
us pay dearly for our Diversion. Thus
we find the Danger described by Solomon;
*As a Madman that casteth Firebrands,
Arrows, and Death; so is he that deceiv-
eth his Neighbour, and saith, Am not I in
Sport?*

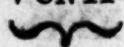
BESIDES these three, there are other
sorts of Lyes, which cannot well be re-
duced under any certain Head; some pro-
ceed purely from Vanity, or Talkative-
ness; from a restless Itch of the Tongue,
which would be always kept in Motion;
and therefore racks the Invention by
Fictions and Lyes, to supply its endless
and extravagant Expence. Other Lyes
there are in our Actions as well as our
Words; a treacherous counterfeit Look,
a dissembling Smile, and even sometimes
a lying Silence, which concealeth the
Truth we ought to discover, are so many
Species of this Sin. I shall conclude this
Part with the Advice of the Wise Son of
*Sirach; Devise not a Lye against thy Bro-
ther; neither do the like to thy Friend; use*

Vol. II. *not to make any manner of Lye, for the custom thereof is not good.*

AND thus having described the Nature and several Sorts of Lying, I should proceed to the second Thing proposed; but that there is a pernicious Mystery of Iniquity published and defended, by some, and those celebrated Guides of Consciences, on purpose to reconcile (if possible) Truth and Falshood; and safely to elude all the Heinousness and Obliquity of this Sin, by Equivocations, mental Reservations, and such easy Methods; and consequently to overthrow all that I have hitherto been establishing: it may be necessary therefore, briefly to expose this impious Doctrine of theirs, which undermineth Justice and Piety, the Christian Religion, and civil Commerce. Equivocation is defined by the Jesuits, the great Masters in the Art, *to be a Speech having a double Sense*; not by any doubtful Signification of the Words themselves, but only by some reservation of Mind in the Speaker; whereby his Meaning is made different from that Sense which the Words import without that Reservation: so that it consisteth of two Parts; one which is spoken, and another which is kept secret within the Mind; and therefore (say they)

the

the equivocating Person speaketh Truth Sermon. in his own Meaning, and in the Sight of XIX. God; though it may seem false in respect of the Hearers: This is the goodly Description they give us of this Practice; and I appeal to any unprejudiced Person, whether it doth not exactly answer the Apostle's Character, of *instructing Men to speak Lyes with Hypocrisy*. I suppose I need not labour much to prove the Iniquity of this Practice; from the very Nature and Definition of a Lye, from the Injustice of imposing upon our credulous Neighbour; from the disturbance of human Society; from the destroying the mutual Benefits of Conversation; and from the defeating all Laws against Perjury and Falshood; which no Man can violate according to this Opinion, but he who is so foolish, or so careless, as to neglect a seasonable Reservation in his Mind: since therefore all Lyes are expressly forbidden in Scripture; these certainly which are most deceitful, because they wear the Dress and Semblance of Truth, must be especially Abominations; being spoken *peaceably*, as the Prophet words it, *with the Mouth, whilst in the Heart there is lying in wait*, But it is time that I should hasten to



II. My second General; namely, to offer some convincing Arguments, which may reasonably dissuade you from the Practice of this Sin.

I. THE first Argument which I shall make use of, shall be to recommend the Beauty and Excellency of Truth. This is the greatest Ornament of human Nature; the brightest Ray of the Divinity communicated to us by the Fountain of all Perfection; the Mistress of every rational Appetite, and the Bait of every commendable Desire; the very Search and Enquiry after which, as it is the greatest Business of Mankind, so also is it its Delight and Privilege: How charming then must the Enjoyment and Possession of it be! How dear the familiar Presence of this sovereign Good of human Nature! Witness the rapturous *Eucora* of *Archimedes*, his ravishing Satisfaction, upon his having found out a useful Demonstration! Witness the inexpressible Pleasure which filleth the Mind, upon the Dawn and Twilight of Truth, in any Science whatsoever! as it is elegantly expressed by *Lucretius*: *No Pleasure, saith he, is comparable to that of standing upon the vantage ground of Truth, where the Air is always clear and serene, and thence*
to

to look down upon the Errors and Wandrings, the Mists and Tempests in the Vale below.

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—Nil dulcius est, benè quàm munita tenere
Edita doctrinâ sapientûm Tempia ferenâ,
Despicere unde queas alios—

See the Description of Truth by the Poets themselves, those allowed Professors of Fiction and Falshood; they make her the Daughter of Time, the Mother of Virtue, the Nurse of Knowledge; of a majestick Stature, an artless unadorned Beauty, and Eyes in Brightness exceeding the Sun and Stars. Truth then, as it is the Honour of our Nature, so should it be our constant Study and Employment. In Speech consisteth the difference between Man and Beast; their Brutality is that they cannot speak, and ours, when we do not actuate our Words with Sincerity and Truth: in this we are worse than them, since none of their inarticulate Voices deceive; we know their different Passions by their various Cries; but Man by Lying corrupteth and abuseth the natural Design of Speech; making that an Instrument of the Imposture, which was intended for the conveyance of Instruction.

Vol. II. 2. A SECOND Argument against Lying
 ~~~~~ may be taken from its opposition and  
 contrariety to the divine Nature. Our  
 God is stiled in Scripture the *God of  
 Truth*; he is said to love it, and to pra-  
 ctise it in all his doings; and utterly to  
 abominate all Falshood and Lying. *Py-  
 thagoras* being asked what made Men  
 like unto God? answered, *speaking Truth*;  
 and the *Persian Magi*, describing their  
 chief God *Oromasdes*, said, *that his Body  
 was composed of the purest Light, and his  
 Soul of Truth*; and we are told of cer-  
 tain Nations in *America*, who to appease  
 their angry Deities, offered no other Sa-  
 crifice, but human Blood drawn from  
 their Tongues, in expiation of the Sin of  
 Lying, which they imagined most odi-  
 ous and provoking to the divine Nature.  
 And as this infamous Practice of Lying  
 is most unlike and disagreeable to the pu-  
 rest Being; so it proportionably increas-  
 eth our Resemblance to the worst, who is  
 the Father of Lyes, and Accuser of the  
 Brethren, and borroweth his *Greek Name*  
*Διαβολος*, from *calumniating* and *detract-*  
*ing*: The first Proposal made by him to  
 the Angels in Heaven was a Lye; his  
 first Word to Man upon Earth, was a Lye  
 also; and his first Resolution, when he  
 entered into Hell, and his principal Con-  
 trivance

trivance of Revenge against God, was to lye eternally, and to infect Mankind with this contagious Evil: whoever therefore practiseth it is a Namesake of the Devil, and putteth on with his Name his Nature and Disposition. But,

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3. LYING is not only a Sin against God, but a manifest Act of Injustice to our Neighbour, and a treacherous Breach of our Faith to Mankind. For all of us, in order to the maintenance of Society, are by an implicit Contract, obliged to express our Thoughts by Speech; to inform each other truly, and not impose upon the Credulity of our Fellow-creatures: Speech was given to Mankind, as in the first place to praise and glorify our Maker, so in the next to benefit and help our Neighbour; as an Instrument of mutual Delight and Succour, of friendly Commerce, and pleasant Conversation, and to supply the Necessities of one another: By this our Tables are made to differ from Mangers, our Cities from Deserts, and our Assemblies from herds of Beasts. How unnatural a perverting then, and how irrational Abuse hereof is it, to misemploy this useful Prerogative to the betraying of human Society, by begetting false Notions and Mistakes, Error and Deception? In a Word, our



Vol. II. Tongue is the Interpreter of our Soul ;  
and if that be bribed or proveth unfaithful, it breaketh off all Commerce, and dissolveth the natural Bands of civil Policy.

4. THERE is no Vice so base and scandalous, that doth so cover a Man with Shame and Confusion of Face, as to be found tripping, or caught in a Lye ; and therefore the Reproach of it is by Men of Honour looked upon as unpardonable ; in as much as it implieth the being Brave towards God, and Cowards towards Men ; profanely to affront his sacred Laws, in humble dread of human Power, for the poor avoiding of Shame or Danger : Add to this the Lyar's Infamy, of never being believed even when he speaketh Truth ; and its being an evident Sign of Ill-breeding, Unmannerliness, and a low and sordid Temper ; and therefore it is chiefly the Vice of People of the meanest Rank and coarsest Education ; who cannot discover the charming Beauties of Truth, and therefore sacrifice it to every Trifle.

5. AND lastly, The Lyar (if by serious and sincere Repentance, he do not retract his Practice, and efface his Sin) doeth utterly banish himself from Heaven and Happiness, and is inevitably exposed to  
eternal

eternal Misery and Destruction. In the Book of *Proverbs* a Lye is often mentioned, as that which God doeth most especially abominate; and in the *Revelation*, *He that loveth and maketh a Lye*, is herded with Dogs and Sorcerers, and eternally shut out of the *New Jerusalem*: nay, the Wickedness of Falshood shall be the last Peal, to call the Judgments of God upon the Generations of Men, it being foretold, that when Christ cometh, *he shall not find Faith* (that is, Faithfulness) *upon the Earth*: and certainly, if for every vain and idle Word we must render a strict Account in the great Day of the Lord; much more shall we be reckoned with for these sort of Words, so empty of Faith, and void of Equity; not only negatively vain, as useless; but positively so, as false and to evil Purposes.

LET us therefore fully purpose and resolve within our selves, to abhor and to avoid this detestable Sin; which is, as I have already shewn you, the Summ and Complication of all Wickedness; directly opposite to the most useful Virtues, Veracity and Sincerity, Charity and Justice; transgressing all the great Commandments, and violating immediately the indispenfible Duties, we owe both to  
 ↓ God,

Vol. II. God, and to our Neighbour. Let us engrave upon our Hearts, what a certain Prince wrote with his Finger upon his Son's Lips, *rather to Perish than to Lye*: Let us hate it more than Death; and though in Conversation it is usually reckoned the most innocent Sin, and in some cases the most necessary; yet let us always esteem it, as really it is, most infamous and shameful to the Dignity of a Christian, and most insupportable to his Honour and his Conscience. Let us, as Men, employ our Speech to the proper Ends designed by God and Nature, in Praises and Hymns, and Prayers; in the manifold uses of Society; in Instructing and Advising, but never in Deceiving or Calumniating our Neighbour. Let us, as Persons of an ingenious Temper, scorn to debase or defile our selves, by so degrading and infamous a Practice: but let us lastly and above all, as we are Christians, that is, as professing a Religion, which prescribeth constant Fidelity and strictest Justice, walk worthy of the Vocation with which we are called, in all Truth and godly Sincerity: since he only (we are assured) *shall abide in the Tabernacle of the Lord, and ascend up unto his holy Hill; who walketh uprightly, and worketh Righteousness, and speaketh the Truth from his Heart.* Grant



Grant unto us therefore, O God of Truth, Sermon.  
Such a just Abhorrence of all manner of XIX.  
Falshood; that neither the Usefulness of  
some Lyes, nor the Pleasantry and seeming  
Inoffensiveness of others, may recommend  
this Vice to our Allowance and Practice;  
but that we may always imitate the Exam-  
ple of our Saviour, who never spake of-  
fensively with his Tongue, and in whose  
Mouth there was no Guile:

To Him, with the Father, and the  
Holy Spirit, be ascribed all Honour,  
Power, Might, Majesty, and Domi-  
nion, henceforth and for evermore.  
Amen.



SERMON



## SERMON XX.

The censuring our Neighbour a condemning our Selves.

ROM. ii. 1. and Part of Verse 2.

*Therefore thou art inexcusable, O Man, whoever thou art that judgest: for wherein thou judgest another, thou condemnest thy self; for thou that judgest, doest the same things.*

*But we are sure that the Judgment of God is according to Truth.*

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**T**HE Apostle setteth himself here to inveigh against a Sin, that is as heinous in its Nature, and yet common in its Practice, as any that hath prevailed amongst the Sons of *Adam*; and that is, the erecting

erecting a Tribunal within our own Breasts, without any Authority for so doing; wherein we try and condemn our Fellow-Christians, passing Sentence upon them according to our Passion, or Pleasure: this he pronounceth to be inexcusable, that it will not admit of any colour or defence; and that in any Man whatsoever that doeth it; neither the high Quality of one, nor the abundant Wealth of another, nor the seeming or real Piety of a Third, being able to justify them in such a Proceeding. For since Criminals (as he well argueth) are not qualified to be Judges, and since all Men are obnoxious to numerous Infirmities, he that censureth another doeth but expose himself, and usurpeth the Bench when he should stand at the Bar. There is indeed one infallible Judge, to whose just Determination we must all submit; but he is God over all blessed for ever, who judgeth the World in Righteousness and Truth; and he is a jealous God, too jealous of his Honour, to let it be invaded by poor weak Mortals; who are only able to judge by Appearances, and are consequently not qualified to pass righteous Judgment. *Therefore thou art inexcusable, O Man (saith the Apostle) whoever thou art, that judgest: for wherein thou judgest*

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~



Vol. II. *judgest another, thou condemnest thy self;  
 for thou that judgest doest the same things :  
 But we are sure that the Judgment of God  
 is according to Truth.*

THESE Words contain several useful Doctrines, of which I design to treat after the following Method :

I. I SHALL consider the Greatness of that Guilt, which those Persons contract, who pretend to judge their Brethren : *Therefore thou art inexcusable, O Man, whoever thou art that judgest.*

II. I SHALL weigh the Force of that Argument, which the Apostle here maketh use of to confirm his Position, and it is, that we are all Fellow-Sinners : *For wherein thou judgest another, thou condemnest thy self ; for thou that judgest doest the same things.*

III. I SHALL shew how unable Men are to judge of others as they ought, and therefore how unfit they are to exercise that Office. And,

IV. I SHALL direct your Thoughts to that Judge, of whom only we can truly affirm, That we are sure his Judgment is according to Truth.

I. THEN,

I. THEN, I shall consider the Greatness of that Guilt, which those Persons contract who pretend to judge their Brethren: *Therefore thou art inexcusable, O Man, whoever thou art that judgest.*

IT is the great Misfortune of too many People, who permit themselves to fall into this pernicious Crime, that they are not sensible of the heinousness of the Sin they are committing, nay sometimes fancy that at the same time they are doing God Service: For we find a great many guilty of this Vice, that are free from the Infection of other gross ones, and appear to lead a Life of Piety and Devotion: But let these Persons know that they are unhappily mistaken; and while they indulge themselves in a censorious Disposition, they deceive their own Souls, and their Religion is but vain; for what Pretensions can they have to true Religion, who willfully offend against the two eminent Duties of Charity and Justice? And,

1. How do they break through all the Ties of Charity, who take delight in passing Censure upon the Frailties of their Fellow-creatures? Who love to magnify their most minute Failings, and to aggravate and enhance every Slip and Transgression?

Vol. II. gression? It is the Office of this Duty, *to cover a multitude of Faults*; whereas they make it their Business to disclose and publish them: This Christian Grace forbiddeth us *to rejoice in Iniquity*; whereas they take in greedily the most malicious Reports, that they may have the Satisfaction of venting and dispersing them: It is the Character of Charity, that it *vaunteth not it self*; whereas these pride themselves in a Pharisaical Distinction; *Stand by thy self, come not near me, for I am holier than thou art::* Thus do they offend against this great Duty, which is truly said to be *the fulfilling of the Law*; and by violating the Sanction of this considerable Point, become liable to the Imputation of transgressing the whole. But neither,

2. Is this Behaviour of theirs agreeable to Justice: since they regard not the first and universal Rule of it; *Whatsoever you would that Men should do unto you, even so do unto them*: For let me appeal to any who employ themselves in this manner, whether it would not grate their very Souls, to have a severe Censure pass upon all their Actions, and their most secret Sins exposed with scandalous Reflections? They must be possessed of a great measure of spiritual Pride, who are  
not



not conscious to themselves of so many inward Corruptions, as would fill them with Shame and Confusion of Face, if they were to be canvassed with Strictness and Severity: and yet this which they would resent so highly, if offered to themselves, they practise without regret against their Brethren; thereby transgressing that venerable Precept, which is said to be *both the Law and the Prophets*. I must confess I have oftentimes considered, by what sort of Sophistry such Persons as these could quiet their Consciences, and lull them into Security, while they indulged themselves in the Commission of so execrable a Crime: and I could never find out above two Excuses, which to their own partial Judgments might seem to palliate it: and these are, a pretended Zeal for the Glory of God; and an extraordinary Concern for the Souls of their Brethren: But we shall easily see upon a due Examination, how little these Apologies will serve to acquit them; and consequently how inexcusable *thou art, O Man, whoever thou art that judgest!* And,

1.) As to the Zeal they pretend to express for the Glory of God: They cannot (they say) see his Laws violated without shewing their disgust against such

Vol. II. Proceedings, and treating the Practitioners with the utmost Severity: not considering that Zeal hath its due Regulations, and is liable without them to degenerate into a Fault: There is a blind Zeal, and there is a furious Zeal, neither of which is acceptable to God; and they who act after the foregoing manner, have theirs generally attended with these shocking Qualifications. It is usually a blind Zeal, a *Zeal without Knowledge*, because it supposeth that a Reverence for God can be consistent with Malice towards their Brethren; or that he can truly love God, *whom he hath not seen, who hateth his Brother, whom he hath seen*: it is a furious Zeal, a *Zeal without Charity*; because they who are acted by it have no respect to the Obligations and Restraints which that Duty layeth upon them; but mangle without regard their Brother's Reputation, and stab him with their Words which are very Swords.

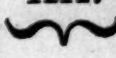
2.) THE second Pretence which these People may make use of, is the Concern which they have for the Souls of their Brethren, whom they would willingly reclaim from the Error of their Ways: But this is a most scandalous Piece of Hypocrisy: For can they aim at any such good Effect, by whispering their Slanders

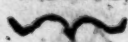
ders behind their Backs, as it is the com-  
 mon Method in such Cases; and endea-  
 vouring to conceal them from their own  
 Knowledge, whereby alone they might  
 prove beneficial? If they had any such  
 kind Intentions as these, they would, in  
 a mild and friendly manner, acquaint the  
 Delinquents with their Offences, and  
 exhort them tenderly to abstain from  
 them; restoring such Offenders in the  
*Spirit of Meekness*, and covering their  
 Faults from others with a Veil of Cha-  
 rity. For can this be supposed to be done  
 out of Kindness, when it is managed  
 after a Manner the most odious and  
 prejudicial? when they labour thereby  
 to diminish their Interest, to corrupt the  
 Affections of those that wish them well,  
 and to make their Friends become Ene-  
 mies, or indifferent! and yet there is  
 hardly any Assembly, where we may not  
 meet with Instances of this nature, where  
 those who caress People to their Faces,  
 do not vilify and scandalize them behind  
 their Backs. Certainly these Wounds  
 which are thus given in secret, are much  
 more pernicious than those of open Ad-  
 versaries; and while they carry it fair  
 outwardly, and at the same Time betray  
 them privately, they do but copy out  
 the Practice of *Joab*, in the 20th Chap-

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Vol. II. ter of the Second Book of *Samuel*; who  
 ~~~~~ said unto *Amasa*, *Art thou in Health, my Brother?* and smote him with his Weapon under the fifth Rib. St. *John* pronounceth him a Murtherer, *who hateth his Brother*, that is, who doeth not love him; and he farther assureth us, that we may certainly conclude, that he hath *not eternal Life abiding in him*: and yet how would this sort of People be startled, if they were accused of cutting their Brethrens Throats, or sticking a Dagger into their Bosoms, who scruple not to murder them in the Apostle's Sense, by depriving them of that which ought to be dearer than their Lives! And now give me leave, before I dismiss this Head, to take notice how universally the Apostle wordeth his Charge; *Thou art inexcusable, O Man, whoever thou art that judgest*: What, may Persons of Rank and Quality be apt to say, may not we pass our Censure upon our Inferiors? though they must not open their Lips against us, must ours be sealed up in respect of them? Even so, for this Rule admitteth of no Exceptions, and God is *no respecter of Persons*: the Rich in this World may probably think, that they are privileged as they please, to judge the Wanting and Necessitated; but they are not allowed

lowed to abuse their Fellow-servants, but Serm. XX.
 must take care to be able to *give an Ac-*
count of their own Stewardship. The 
 precisely Devout may suppose they are
 intitled to inveigh against all such as are
 meaner Proficients; but let them beware
 that (as the Gospel wordeth it) they trust
 not too much in themselves *that they are*
righteous, and despise others: and let all
 of them listen to what St. Paul saith,
Who art thou that judgest another Man's
Servant? to his own Master he standeth
or falleth. And now since we have seen
 that these two Apologies, which are by
 far the most plausible of any, are insuf-
 ficient to patronize so unchristian a Pra-
 ctice; we may, without any breach of
 Charity, conclude of those who are guilt-
 y of this Sin, that their Zeal for God is
 but counterfeit; since if it were genuine,
 it would be accompanied with Love to
 their Neighbour: and their Concern for
 the Souls of their Brethren is but dis-
 sembled; since if it were real, it would
 be attended with a Care of their Reputa-
 tion: and therefore *thou art inexcusable,*
O Man, whoever thou art that judgest, for
wherein thou judgest another thou con-
demnest thy self; which leadeth me,



II. To my second Proposition; in which I am to weigh the Force of that Argument, which the Apostle here maketh use of to confirm his Position; and it is, That we are all Fellow-sinners: *For wherein thou judgest another, thou condemnest thy self; for thou that judgest, doest the same Things.*

WERE not most of us withholden by spiritual Pride from taking a just Survey of our own numerous Failings, we should meet with such a quantity of Business at home, as would hinder and prevent us from looking curiously abroad; And I believe the best amongst us, if they would thus employ their Time, would find much less reason to boast with the proud Pharisee, *God, I thank thee, that I am not such as other Men*; than to close with the poor Publican in his humble Address, *Lord, be merciful to me a Sinner*. But the great Unhappiness of it is, that in these sort of Prospects we always make a wrong Use of the Perspective; we view our own Faults through that End of it, which lesseneth the Object, and setteth it at a Distance; and we look upon the Failings of other People with that which magnifieth them, and sheweth them nearer; and by this means the

Beam

Beam in our own Eye seemeth but as a *Serm.*
Mote, and the *Mote in our Brother's Eye* XX.
 hath the appearance of a Beam. If we
 can discover any Transgression in our
 Neighbour, of which we cannot grossly
 and directly accuse our selves; we pre-
 sently make that a Matter of Triumph,
 though we are guilty of greater of a
 different Nature: if he doeth not pay
 Tythe of Mint, Anise, and Cummin, we
 applaud our selves under those trivial Per-
 formances; whilst we neglect the greater
 Matters of the Law, *Judgment*, and
Mercy, and *Faith*: Thus do we, as the
 Apostle well informeth us, condemn our
 selves whilst we are judging others; be-
 cause guilty of Transgressions as great or
 greater, than those which we reflect up-
 on with so much Severity. For it is not
 necessary to our deserving this Character,
 that we should be guilty of the same in-
 dividual Vice; if we foster any of an
 equal Malignity, we are equally liable to
 this Imputation; as the Apostle well in-
 structeth us in that sharp Expostulation, in
 which he specifieth two different Crimes;
Thou who abhorrest Idols, dost thou com-
mit Sacrilege? and yet it falleth out very
 frequently, that they who censure others
 with the greatest Sharpness, are not free
 even from those Vices they so sharply stig-
 matize;

Vol. II. matize ; only they are blind to them in relation to themselves, however quick-sighted they may be in respect of others : and we may address to too many of them directly with *St. Paul, Thou that sayest a Man should not commit Adultery, dost thou commit Adultery ?* And now would not one imagine that such a Partnership in Guilt should incline Men to a Tenderness towards their Fellow-sinners ? but the Mischief of it is, that by these rougher Measures they think to conceal their own Enormities ; and that People will be favourably disposed to believe, that they cannot be guilty of those Imperfections, which they declaim against so violently when practised by others : and their Design is like that of certain Birds, who make a great Noise at a distance from their homes, to secure their own Nests from being searched for or found out. But how must their Consciences fly in their Faces, though they may chance to be undiscovered by human Knowledge ? How must those represent to them the ill Consequence of those Censures, which must return with double Force against themselves ? And how little reason have they to expect Forgiveness at the Hands of their heavenly Father ; who are so far from forgiving the Trespases

passēs of their Brethren, that they set
 them in the worst Light to enhance and
 expose them? and yet it is a farther Aggra-
 vation of their Fault, that they general-
 ly proceed upon bare Hearsay, and vent
 their Calumnies upon the slightest Re-
 ports; whereas the greatest Certainty
 would not authorize this Practice, nor
 leave them guiltless under the relating of
 uncharitable Truths. To this End it is
 that our Saviour cautioneth us, *not to*
judge according to appearance, because
 we are apt to be led away by the Out-
 sides of Things, without prying duly into the
 Bottom of them: and he adviseth us af-
 terwards to *judge righteous Judgment*;
 that is, at least to let them have a Foun-
 dation of Truth, though that (as I be-
 fore hinted) is not sufficient to indemnify
 us. But having happened to mention
 uncharitable Truths, it may not be im-
 proper very briefly to observe; that as
 Matters of Fact are seldom in this case
 related nakedly, without ill-natured Im-
 provements by the Relater; so if they
 really stuck to the Truth it self, it will
 not excuse them in the Publication of it:
 since if Truth be not to be spoken at all
 Times, this Rule will hold most strong-
 ly and infallibly, when the speaking of it
 may be prejudicial to our Neighbour,
 when

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Vol. II. when Charity, which is a Duty of constant Obligation, must be sacrificed to an unseasonable Veracity, that is not always required at our Hands: for though whenever we speak, we must certainly speak Truth, yet Silence in this Case is more commendable than speaking. And here I cannot but take notice of those, who though they do not expressly pass Censure upon their Brethren; yet encourage them who are given to this Practice, by affording them a quiet and favourable Hearing: these Receivers are very little better than those Thieves which steal away the Reputation of People: since were it not for the Countenance such Persons give them, the others would be ashamed to pursue their Calumnies; and would be forced to find out some other Topicks of Conversation, such at least as might be innocent, if they were not useful. And now I would to God, that all amongst us, who pretend to be zealous for the Glory of God, would suffer their Zeal to act the right Way; and incline them to advance it by their own good Actions, and by promoting the Advantage of his adopted Children: and that those who seem concerned for the Souls of their Brethren, would first let their Charity begin at home, by mending themselves; and then studiously advance the

the true Interest of others. Otherwise, Sermon, when they whisper abroad reflecting Stories, and scatter underhand their uncharitable Slanders, they seem to fear and avoid that sharp Expostulation, *Thou that teachest another, teachest thou not thyself?* I proceed now, XX.

III. IN the third Place to shew, How unable Men are to judge of others as they ought, and therefore how unfit they are to exercise that Office. And,

I. They are unqualified by reason of their Ignorance; as not being able to get a true Information of those Matters upon which they make bold to pass Sentence. There are so many Circumstances which attend every Action, and which lessen or increase its Value or its Guilt; that it is next to impossible for Man's imperfect Knowledge to trace any Fact through so great a Variety, and which giveth such a Turn to our several Performances: Especially the Intention and inward Motive layeth a mighty Stress upon our outward Behaviour. Would not any one never so little inclined to censuring, be shocked to see an *Abraham* about to kill his only Son; unless he were let into the divine Secret, and saw how strong a Faith engaged him to that seeming Barbarity?

Vol. II. barity? Would not such a one be startled
to behold a Prophet devoting a Man
to Death for not smiting him till he bled,
though he had not given him the least
Provocation; were he not convinced that
he came to him in the Word of the Lord,
that he might denounce his Judgments
against a wicked *Abab*? Thus we see how
apt we are to misconstrue outward Acti-
ons, when we view not the secret Springs
that give them their Motion. But far-
ther, we are not only deceived for want
of Knowledge, but we are often misled
by Passion or Partiality, to pass a wrong
Sentence upon the Behaviour of our Bre-
thren: Our Anger often blindeth the lit-
tle Judgment which we have, and we are
led into Mistakes by that short-lived Mad-
ness: If we are prejudiced against their
Persons, or take any Thing amiss from
them in relation to our selves; this is
enough to poison all their Words and
Actions, and expose what they say or do
to uncharitable Misprisions, especially
in this perverse and contentious Generati-
on, when Faction hath divided Men into
opposite Parties; how nearly do they re-
semble the *Jews* and *Samaritans* of old,
who would not do the least charitable Of-
fice, nor perform the common Duties of
Humanity, to such as were of a contrary

Perfuasion, however deserving, or how-Serm.
ever necessitated. Again, we are all more XX.
or less addicted to spiritual Pride, especi-
ally the Cenforious are never free from
it. They think the lessening of their
Brother's Esteem may be a probable Me-
thod for the advancing their own Chara-
cter; and are willing to sacrifice to their
own Vanity, the Interest and Reputation
of other People: They are apt to believe
that their Faults may be concealed, by
laying open as much as possible the Fail-
ings of their Brethren; and that by em-
ploying their Acquaintances in relation to
them, they may divert them from enqui-
ring into, or observing their own. Ma-
ny other Imperfections and Incapacities
we lie under, which render us unable to
discharge this Office duly, and therefore
we are very unfit to enter upon it, and
should be cautious how we undertake so
difficult a Province. The due Perform-
ance therefore of so ticklish a Business
must be referred to other, to better
Hands; where there are none of these
Impediments to be met with, but they
are all swallowed up in such Perfections
as are infinite; which bringeth me,

IV. To my fourth and last Proposition,
in which I am to direct your Thoughts to
that

Vol. II. that Judge, of whom only we can truly affirm, That we are sure his Judgment is according to Truth.

God is a Being of infinite Wisdom, and we cannot therefore suspect that he should be imposed upon, since *all Things are naked and manifest in his sight*: He prieth into the innermost Recesses of the Heart, and trieth and examineth our very Reins; the slightest and most imperfect Motions of our Minds are plainly perceived by his All-seeing Eye, and *he understandeth our Thoughts long before*: He vieweth our Intentions as clearly as our Actions; and by comparing both together is qualified to pass a true Sentence upon them: The Hypocrite, under all his demure Pretences, is as loathsome in his Sight as the open Libertine; and he is conscious of the inward Rottenness of that whited Sepulchre: In vain doeth Darkness shrowd the Adulterer from human Eyes, while he standeth convicted as such in the Presence of God; to whom the Night is as bright as the Day, *Darkness and Light being to him both alike*; and the midnight Thief is as manifest to him, as the Robber who strolleth about at Noon-Day: He therefore goeth upon such Evidence as cannot fail, being an Eye-witness of these Matters upon which

he passeth Sentence. But neither is he influenced by any By-respects, or biaſſed in his Judgment by any Sort of Prejudice: He always acteth by those unchangeable Rules of Justice, which he hath established from all Eternity; and which are as immutable as the Author of them, *in whom is no Variableness, neither Shadow of Turning.* The greatest and most powerful amongst the Sons of Men, are not exempted from this grand Tribunal; nor can the poorest fail of a righteous Verdict there, where there is no bribing either of Judge or Jury. Shall not then this *Judge of all the Earth do right?* He weigheth in his Balance all Things in Heaven and Earth, and nothing but strict Justice can turn the Scale. But as all his Decrees are infinitely just, so (blessed be his most holy Name!) they are tempered with boundless Goodness also: *He is not extream to mark what is done amiss,* but even in his *Wrath thinketh upon Mercy:* He giveth those gracious Allowances for our Infirmities, which are so hard to be met with at the Hands of Men; and thereby it often cometh to pass, that those who have been treated most severely by them, by his merciful Sentence are acquitted and absolved.

LET

Vol. II.

LET those then who meet with such harsh Usage here, look up and rejoice, that they can appeal to him, *who seeth not as Man seeth, nor judgeth as Man judgeth*; but who, when he casteth his Eyes upon our Errors and Transgressions, compassionately considereth that we are but Dust; and let those who indulge themselves in censuring others, prepare to appear before the Judgment Seat of Christ, adorned with those Virtues which will chiefly recommend them: Humility and Charity, which are so inconsistent with despising their Brethren, and magnifying themselves, will be then the best Passports to obtain an Entrance into the everlasting Kingdom of our heavenly Father; these are the wedding Garments which all must appear in, who expect to be admitted to the Marriage Supper of the Lamb.

Now to God the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, be ascribed all Honour, Power, Might, Majesty, and Dominion, henceforth and for evermore. Amen.



SERMON



SERMON XXI.

**Haughtiness of Spirit an
Enemy to Devotion.**

JEREMIAH xiii. 15.

*Hear ye, and give ear, be not Proud:
for the Lord hath spoken.*

THE Seeds of natural Vanity Serm.
and Self-conceitedness are to XXI.
be found within the Breast of
every Man; we are all of us
gross Parasites and Flatterers
of our selves; we magnify each faint
dawning and appearance of Virtue; we
gild over or conceal our Vices and Imper-
fections;

Vol. II. fections ; and when there is nothing in us that is truly valuable, we make use of Tricks to impose upon our selves, casting our Eyes upon such as are yet viler than we are ; and endeavouring to acquire, by that easy Method, a comparative sort of Fame at second-hand. And therefore though some have supposed it necessary that Men should be possessed of a moderate Pride, to buoy up the Infirmities of human Nature, to balance and counterpoise our numerous Frailties, and to support us under the mortifying Sense of a Thousand unavoidable Miseries and Afflictions : yet since it is so very difficult to keep the golden Mean in this particular ; since the smallest Indulgence often spoileth our Temper ; and the Soil before being too well disposed, the least Cultivation rendereth it rank and over-fruitful : we should rather strive by all suitable Methods to repress such excessive Tumours and Swellings of the Mind ; and should seriously listen to the Advice of the Prophet, *Be not proud.*

IN my following Discourse upon these Words, I shall make use of this plain and easy Method :

I. I SHALL enquire into the Nature and various Kinds of this prevailing Vice of Pride, and of the opposite Virtue of Humility.

II. I SHALL lay down some Means and Motives for our avoiding the one, and attaining to the other.

I. THEN, I shall enquire into the Nature and various Kinds of this prevailing Vice of Pride, and of the opposite Virtue of Humility.

I. PRIDE in general is a groundless Elevation, or being puffed up, either in Thought, or Words, or Actions, upon the account of some extraordinary good Qualities and Perfections, which a Man fancieth he is possessed of; and whereby he is induced to entertain an undeserved Esteem of himself, and an unjust Contempt of all Men else. This, I say, is a Description of this Vice in general; but the Nature of it will be understood more clearly and distinctly, if we examine and consider it in its several Particulars.

I.) THEN, if this Haughtiness remain in the Mind only, and spreadeth its Contagion no farther than the Thoughts, it is then called Self-conceitedness; that is,

Vol. II. a vehement Inclination to be hugely pleased and in love with one's self; to doat upon one's own imaginary Excellencies; to carry one's Mistress always in one's Bosome, and one's Darling continually about one; it sheweth a Man to himself through a magnifying Optick, which representeth his Abilities much larger than the Life; by such deceitful Methods inducing him to conclude all his Sayings to be Oracles, and all his Actions to be Wonders. And yet it is a Matter of as dangerous Consequence, to know too well our own good Qualities, however real and remarkable they may be, as to be ignorant of our Vices and Imperfections; for the Graces and Ornaments of our Souls (if we would secure our selves from being puffed up by them) should be treated like the Defects and Nakedness of our Bodies; we ought to hide them equally from our Eyes, it is criminal and indecent to cast a Look towards either of them, and Modesty should prompt us to conceal them both. But,

2.) If the Venome of this Vice proceedeth yet farther, and shedeth its Malignity upon the Tongue, it is then called by the Name of Boasting; which is a most scandalous and shameful Practice, of becoming not only a Man's own Histo-

rian, but his Flatterer too; such a Man as this, turneth the partial Herald of his own Praises, and is always publishing a Panegyrick upon himself: he tireth all those amongst whom he converseth, with the tedious Repetition of his fancied Excellencies; and is wonderous grateful in returning continual Thanks to Almighty God, for Perfections and Endowments which he never gave him. From hence naturally grow two other Branches of this Sin; a supercilious Contempt of all besides, and an obstinate Positiveness in one's own Opinion: the proud Man is placed in imaginary Height, where he insolently triumpheth over the supposed Infirmities of Inferiors; he looketh down from thence with Scorn and Disdain, upon those whom he believeth to lie groveling beneath him; and therefore interpreteth all Contradiction from others as an unpardonable Affront to his Wisdom and Grandeur: for this Vice, at the same time that it maketh us conceive too highly of our selves, induceth us to think too meanly of all others; it will no more endure an Equal, than a Superior; but looketh upon it as a debasing of it self, to have any other advanced upon the same Level; it is always accompanied with Uncharitableness, and constantly affecteth a mo-

Vol. II. rose Singularity; being as apt unjustly
to censure others, as it is unreasonably to
applaud it self. But,

3.) IF this Vice spreadeth yet farther,
and influenceth the Actions, it then taketh
upon it self the Name of Vain-glory; which
is an insatiable thirst after the Praise of Men,
wherewith some are so miserably affected, as to
accommodate all their Actions to the attainment
of this mean and trifling End; they lay Baits
for popular Favour, court the airy Applause
of Worldlings, and make use of all their Artifice
and Diligence, to arrive at this fleeting fantastical
Enjoyment: even Virtue it self is but too often
made a Sacrifice to Fame; they throw away the
Substance for the Shadow; present Happiness for
future Praise; the Good which they possess for
Satisfaction in reversion: and yet Praise is at best
but a thin sort of Nourishment, which only
satisfieth depraved and sickly Appetites; it is
seldom any thing else but refined Flattery; which
after differing manners contents both the Giver
and Receiver, and proceedeth from a Principle
of Vanity in them both; the latter taking it
always as the Recompence of his Merit; and the
former bestowing it as the Mark of his Judgment
and Discernment. But
here

here we must nicely and cautiously distinguish between this foolish Humour, and that honest Concern, which every Man ought to have for his good Name and Reputation ; for this is that beauty of Holiness which charmeth the Beholders ; a necessary Tribute paid to Virtue by all the World ; a natural Brightness, and inimitable Lustre, which adorneth and setteth off all commendable Actions ; and therefore our Saviour alloweth and commandeth us *to let this Light shine before Men* ; whereas the other is a meer *Ignis fatuus*, a sordid Meteor, raised from the corrupted Breath of designing Men, and may fatally mislead us into Ruin and Destruction. This then is the Nature, and these are the various Kinds of this prevailing Vice of Pride.

2. I go on to the Consideration of its contrary Virtue, Humility.

By Humility (which Word must be taken largely, not only as opposite to what we generally call Pride, but likewise to each particular Branch of it, such as Vain-glory, Boasting, and Self-conceitedness) by Humility, I say, is meant, a low and mean Opinion which Men entertain of themselves and their Actions ; and a being satisfied and contented, that others should have the same Opinion also : and

Vol. II. it may be considered, either with respect
 to God, our Neighbour, or our Selves.

I.) IN relation to Almighty God; our Humility is a submissive Temper of Mind, arising from a due Sense of his glorious Excellencies, of our own Frailties and Imperfections, and of our absolute Dependence upon his Bounty and Mercy: it consisteth in rendering him all due Honour and Praise; in arrogating none of that Glory or Perfection to our selves, which are his peculiar and incommunicable Attributes; in an intire active Obedience to his Commands, and in a patient thankful Submission to all his Judgments and Inflictions; in an humble reliance upon his Wisdom and Providence, with a satisfactory Comportment in whatsoever Condition; and in a chearful and grateful Acknowledgment, that all our Perfections and Enjoyments are the Effects of his Bounry, who is the *Author of every good and perfect Gift*: This is to obey the Apostle's Precept as we ought, to submit our selves in every thing to God, and to *humble our selves under his mighty Hand, that he may exalt us in due time*: and indeed whoever shall reflect seriously upon the incomprehensible Excellencies, the sovereign Empire, and the unwearied Goodness

ness of God, on the one hand; and upon human Imperfections, Wants, and Dependencies on the other; will need no other Argument but such a Reflection, to convince him of the Reasonableness of this part of our Duty. But,

2.) IN respect of our Neighbour; our Humility consisteth, as St. Paul informeth us, *in being kindly affectioned one towards another with brotherly Love* (for this Grace and Charity are always inseparable) *in honour preferring one another*; and in lowliness of Mind, *esteeming others better than our selves*; which Words of Honour and Esteem, are to be understood of those Acts of Condescension, which the highest Disciple is obliged to shew even to the meanest; for this is the true Exaltation of a Christian, the proper Character of Evangelical Grandeur; since, according to our Saviour's Description of it, *whosoever would be greatest amongst his Followers, must become their Minister*; and *whosoever would be Chief among them, must be as their Servant*.

ANOTHER Branch of Humility towards our Neighbour, is Meekness, Affability, or familiar Treatableness in our Conversation with all Men; so as studiously to avoid all surly Moroseness, supercilious Distance, or haughty Contempt
of

Vol. II. of our fellow-Christians on the one hand; and all servile Flattery on the other; steering evenly betwixt them both, in Gentleness, Goodness, and Humanity, which are reckoned by St. Paul as the principal Fruits of the Spirit.

THERE is yet another kind of Humility towards our Neighbour; and that is, the behaving our selves reverently and submissively to our Superiors, to such as are either to govern or instruct us; likewise, ye younger (saith St. Peter) *submit your selves unto the elder, and be cloathed with Humility*: this Submission consisteth in suitable Expressions and Behaviour towards them; in a ready Execution of all their just Commands; in a kind Entertainment of their Reproofs and Admonitions; and in a patient undergoing of deserved Punishments; as it is elegantly expressed by St. James in one Word, *ὑποτάξαι*, *an easiness and tractableness to be managed and governed*: By such a regular subordination of Members is the Beauty and Harmony of all Communities preserved; even that of private Families, as well as publick Societies; and as a large Family is a little Commonwealth, and Oeconomicks are but Politicks in Miniature; so from a stubborn and ungovernable Temper in the one, a shrewd

shrewd Presage may usually be made of a Serm. restless and unquiet Spirit in the other. But, XXI.

3.) IN relation to our Selves; Humility consisteth in a moderate Esteem of our Selves and our Actions; neither overrating any Endowments we possess, nor falsely arrogating such as we have not; in a quick and lively Sense of our Defects and Infirmities; in a mortified Appetite towards Honours and Preferments; and therefore shunning all vain Ostentation of Riches, Birth, Parts, or Learning; and in being adorned with Modesty, Sobriety, and Condescension; that so the Meekness and Lowliness of our Souls may be manifestly apparent in our Words and in our Actions; and thus much for the Enquiry which I proposed to make into the Nature and various Kinds of Pride, and of the opposite Virtue of Humility, which was the first general Head of my Discourse. I now proceed,

II. To lay down some Means and Motives, for our avoiding the one, and attaining to the other.

I. THE first Argument against Pride I shall take from the universal Hatred and Detestation which is expressed against it by all Men, and more especially by Almighty God. Even the proudest Men
abhor

Vol. II. abhor Pride in others; and though they are so blind, as not to discover that Monster in their own Embraces, yet they quickly perceive its Deformity in any one else; a haughty Man, as it is out of his road to oblige others, so is he incapable of being obliged himself, and consequently is in no possibility of being beloved; for he either scorneth and rejecteth a Kindness, as beneath him; or arrogatech and claimeth it as his Due, and not a Favour: But Pride, as it is thus hated and abhorred by Men, so is it more especially abominated by Almighty God. He asserteth it as his peculiar Province to resist the Haughtiness; *I am against thee*, saith he, *O thou most proud.* And no Vice is more remarkable than this, either for the Antiquity or Severity of its Punishments. Before the Creation of this sublunary World, this Sin was signally punished in the Apostate Angels: neither the Excellency of their Nature, nor the Eminency of their Station, could expiate or mitigate this Offence; but they were cast out from the Presence of an incensed God, and condemned to eternal Pains and Darkness; so that Pride was a Tempter even to the Devil himself, and by an unhappy Influence, transformed *Lucifer*, the Son of the Morning, the brightest created

created resemblance of the Deity, into a Serp, loathsome and deformed Fiend: In the very Infancy of Time and Nature, our first Parents, seduced by this specious Transgression, fell from their earthly Paradise, as the Angels had done from their heavenly one: nor did repeated Judgments deter their Posterity, but they proudly attempted even Heaven it self; endeavoured to take it by an odd sort of Violence, and even to scale the very Throne of God, till they were confounded and dispersed by a multiplicity of Languages: Thus neither the Force of *Pharaoh* with his Chariots and his Horses, nor the Mightiness of *Nebuchadnezzar*, nor the Craft and Policy of *Herod*, could defend them from the Vengeance of an offended God, provoked to Anger by this most hateful Sin; as the History of their several Punishments is recorded in the Scriptures. From whence we may conclude that Pride is such a Vice, as is most eminently detestable in the Sight of God and Man.

2. A SECOND Argument against this Sin shall be drawn from its Folly and Unreasonableness. Pride is nothing else but Hypocrisy inverted; since thereby a Man layeth himself open to the World, loudly publishing his Frailties and Infirmities,

Vol. II. mities, by a vain Pomp and Ostentation; yet with all imaginable caution conceal-eth them from himself; and suffereth none but pleasing Ideas of his own Excellencies, and golden Dreams to fill his Mind: for so very treacherous is this Vice, that it combineth with all who design to cheat and impose upon us; and sheweth the way to foreign Flatterers, by introducing into our own Bosoms, the most pernicious domestick one. Suppose we then a happy Possessor of all the Goods of Nature, and Fortune, and Grace; yet still what hath he, but what he hath received from the free Bounty and Goodness of another? What doeth he enjoy, but what he is indebted for? This may justly indeed excite his Gratitude, but should never lay a Foundation for Pride. But let us descend a little more narrowly to Particulars, and examine how slight the Foundation is, which Pride usually buildeth upon. One Man valueth himself upon the Advantage of his Birth, to which he was not able in any manner to contribute; he prideth himself in the good Qualities of some one of his Ancestors, which only serve to upbraid him for not transcribing that Original; and he is only the more exposed to Contempt and Censure, by how much

much the more is expected from the Descendant of such a Race. Another is haughty upon the account of his Wealth, for being the watchful Gaoler of a little yellow Earth, which the Sun hath put a Price upon by the giving it that Colour ; and yet his anxious Care in acquiring and preserving, and his constant Fear of losing, maketh his Life still restless and uneasy ; his Abundance exposeth him to Spoil and Rapine, and maketh him at once the Mark both of Envy and of Danger. A third is very fond of Glory and Renown ; which is a Revenue chiefly payable to our Ghosts, and but a Collection of the Suffrages of the ignorant Multitude ; a faint Reflection of that Virtue and Worth which we often sacrifice to the attainment of it ; and is withal so frail and brittle a Possession, that a well-formed Calumny, or confident Misrepresentation, may dash in Pieces that Reputation in a Moment, which it was the Business of many Years to build up and establish. A Fourth is puffed up with Power and Authority ; that is, he is proud of a Burthen and of Care, of real Servitude and Slavery, though the Chains are golden, and the Guards bare-headed ; he valueth himself upon being still besieged by Clients, daily tired with impertinent

Vol. II. pertinent Ceremony, and always fixed in a stiff uneasy Posture of Greatness: and yet after all, this admired Power is not properly his, nor inherent in him; but purely dependeth upon the Promises, Faith, or Assistance of others, who may soon recal the imaginary Possession, and change that Figure, which now standeth in the Place of Thousands, into a common and unregarded Cypher. A Fifth is elevated upon the account of some natural Endowments, such as Strength, Beauty, or the like; which are wholly out of our Power to procure, and purely the free Gifts of an Almighty Benefactor; which are so fading too and transitory, that a Thousand Accidents and Diseases destroy them; or old Age at least certainly enfeebleth the greatest Strength, and wrinkleth and furroweth the most beautiful Countenance. A Sixth prideth himself in his Wit and Learning; and yet if we observe the great Blindness of our Minds, and the Feebleness of human Reason, by many palpable Indications discovering it self; if we consider how painful the Search is, and how difficult the Comprehension of any Truth; how hardly the most Sagacious can discover, and how easily the most Judicious mistake; how the most Learned everlastingly dispute, and

and the wisest irreconcilably clash about *Sermon*
Matters that seem the most obvious and fa- *XXL*
miliar, or at last, if we reflect, that old Age
will wither the Charms of Wit and Learn-
ing, and shrink us all into Children again;
or that a Fever or an Apoplexy may deface
and confound these admired Characters;
how little will it become us to be proud
of such Accomplishments, as lie at the
Mercy of Time or a Disease, and are ful-
ly as uncertain as they are imperfect? I
should be ashamed to add, but that it is
too common, that some are so foolish, as
to pride themselves in the Finery of their
Cloaths, that is, in the Labour of the Silk-
worm, and the Product of the Loom; a
Vanity as ridiculous as that of Children,
and something below the Affectation of a
Peacock; which can vye Bravery with
the most shining Gallant, and hath the
additional Advantage of not borrowing
from another. Thus empty and unrea-
sonable are the most usual Causes, which
minister Occasion to our Pride and Van-
ity; and if we duly examine them, the
Slightness of the Foundation sufficiently
exposeth the Weakness of the Superstru-
cture.

3. A THIRD Argument against Pride
shall be deduced from its mischievous Ef-
fects, and that numerous Brood of spread-
L ing

Vol. II. ing Evils which it propagateth throughout the World: It is a multiplied Devil, and its Name is Legion; and therefore it is asserted by *Zuinglius*, to be the Original Sin intailed upon the Posterity of *Adam*. Whence proceedeth Atheism? but either from the Pride of Mens Hearts, that cannot endure a sovereign Lord over them; or from the Pride of their Wits, which scorn to think as the Vulgar do, but dare attack the most avowed Truths. Whence arise Heresies? But from haughtiness and ungovernable Spirits, who upon the Score of Vain-glory set up for being the Heads of Parties, and publish Schemes of Religion of their own devising? The Pride of the *Gnosticks* made the first Heresy; and the plain Simplicity of the Gospel was a Stumbling-block to the conceited *Jew*, and Foolishness to the learned *Gentile*. Whence proceed Strife, Disobedience, Wars? *Solomon* will inform us; *By Pride* (saith he) *cometh Contention*: An ambitious Desire of Power and Authority, and an inward Fund of Self-conceitedness, render Men uncontrollable by Laws or Governors, and will let them allow none but their own Wills and Lusts to be the Rule and Measure of their Actions: Hence also may we derive most of the unhappy Disputes amongst Men

Men of Learning; who striving for a Superiority in Knowledge, for Reputation, and for Victory, become impatient of Contradiction, eager and implacable: From the same Root cometh Envy, Malice, Detraction, Uncharitableness, and a Thousand other Furies, which fill the World with Disorder and Confusion: Nay, it not only produceth these Evils, but rendereth them utterly incurable also; by frustrating all such Means and Remedies as might be instrumental to their Amendment; for Methods of Gentleness and Mercy are unnaturally perverted to the nourishing of this Humour, and mistaken as the Rewards of a transcendent Merit; and Punishments or Reproofs beget nothing in a proud Heart, but Repinings, Murmurings, and Reproaches.

THESE Considerations may I hope be sufficient, to dissuade us from Pride or Self-conceitedness; to which the Christian Virtue, Humility, being exactly opposite, there will need the fewer Arguments to recommend its Practice, it being the natural Result of thoroughly knowing and understanding our selves, and an extorted Confession of our own Impotency and Imperfections.

IF then, in order to the Practice of this Virtue, we would search our Hearts,

Vol. II. and try our Ways; comparing them with the Rules of our Duty, and with the Dictates of right Reason; if we would lay in one Scale our Sins and our Defects, our vain Thoughts, our fond Desires, our disorderly Passions, and our frail Resolutions; if to these we would add the Deformities of our Souls, the manifold Imperfections of our Nature, and the numberless Failings and Misdemeanors of our Lives; would all our boasted Endowments and Perfections outweigh these? Could we, without extream Partiality, find any Thing in our selves to admire and doat upon? Should we not rather be induced, with a holy Displeasure and Regret, to abhor and detest our manifest Impurities? Let us therefore, by such Considerations as these, study to improve this most excellent Virtue of Humility, the Fountain and Foundation of all other Graces; and the first Link of that golden Chain, which reacheth to Heaven, and leadeth us thither; by which alone we can procure the Favour and Acceptance of our God, *For he giveth Grace unto the Humble, and guideth the Meek in Judgment*; by which alone our Souls are kept in Evenness and Tranquillity, our Passions preserved cool and sedate, under a strict and constant Discipline; by which
we

we are made sober and vigilant in the greatest Affluence of Prosperity, and contentedly patient in Afflictions and Adversity; since an humble Mind never swelleth above that Station which Providence assigneth it, but either bendeth to it, or sinketh below it: In order to cultivate this Grace within us, let us continually meditate upon the great Example which our Lord and Master hath set before us, who exercised this Virtue in its most absolute Perfection; let us frequently compare our selves with those above us, with such as excel in Worth and Virtue; so will our Conceitedness be checked, and our Vanity suppressed. Is any one proud of Parts or Learning, of Wealth or Power, of Beauty or of Strength? Let him reflect upon the celebrated Wisdom and Grandeur of *Solomon*, the Beauty of *Ab-salom*, the Strength of *Samson*; and then doubtless his own Perfections will appear small and inconsiderable, and be eclipsed by the Brightness of such illustrious Luminaries: Let us watchfully observe the very first Motions and Ebullitions of Pride; and keep a Guard upon our earliest Inclinations, that they may not be seduced by Praise or Vain-glory. It is observable in the *Hebrew* Tongue, that the same Word *לָוַי* emphatically signifieth,

Vpl. II. both *to applaud* and *to infatuate*; as if the Wisdom of that Language would thereby insinuate, that Vanity and Prudence are inconsistent, and that the proud Man and the Fool are upon the same level. In a word, Humility it is that rendereth all other Graces acceptable to God; Devotion with Pride is Ostentation and Hypocrisy; good Works, Fasting, Charity it self, if accompanied with Vain-glory, are dead and insignificant, and verily already they have their Reward; so that this single Virtue is the Foundation and Ground-work, the Perfection and Accomplishment, of all other evangelical Duties whatsoever. Let us then bear this Image of our Saviour always in our Souls, for he *was meek and lowly in Heart*. This will not only resemble us to him here, but will give us the Fruition of him hereafter; where we shall meet with an Improvement of those celestial Joys, which nothing but Humility is capable of occasioning; when the great Master of that eternal Feast shall address himself to those modest Guests, with the surprizing Encouragement of, *Friend, Go up higher*. To this ineffable Scene of everlasting Happiness God of his infinite Mercy conduct us all, through the Merits and Mediation of our blessed Saviour: *To whom*

*whom with the Father and the Holy Spirit, Sermon.
be ascribed all Honour, Power, Might, XXI.
Majesty, and Dominion, henceforth and for
evermore. Amen.*





SERMON XXII.

Humility an Ornament to Religious Duties.

MATT. xi. latter Part of the 29th
Verse.

*Learn of me, for I am meek and low-
ly in Heart, and ye shall find Rest
unto your Souls.*

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UNDER the *Mosaical* Dispen-
sation, the *Jews*, a carnal
People, were too apt to turn
all inward Piety into outward
Formality; so that in process
of Time, Vanity and Ostentation became
the main Ingredients of their divine Wor-
ship;

Ship: They measured their Devotion by the Breadth of their Phylacteries, and the Largeness of their Fringes was the Standard of their Perfection. Yet this Carcase of Religion without a Soul, this *Form of Godliness without the Power of it*, they valued themselves so much upon; that they looked down with Scorn and Contempt upon the Christian Profession, which came unattended with such empty Pageantry, and recommended to the vain-glorious Scribe inward Purity, and to the proud *Pharisee* the self-denying Virtue of Humility. Wherefore our blessed Saviour, perceiving this spiritual Pride of theirs to be the main Obstacle to their Conversion (by representing them to themselves so perfect and so knowing, as that they stood in no need either of Amendment or Instruction) setteth himself upon all Occasions to expose the evil Consequences of it; branding it with the hateful Name of Hypocrisy, and frequently extolling the opposite Virtue of Meekness and Humility. But though the whole New Testament is filled with Commendations of this truly Christian Grace, yet no where is it more fully recommended to us than in the Words of my Text, where our Saviour enforceth the Practice of this Duty, by his own

Exam-

Vol. II. Example, by his exprefs Command, and by a Promise annexed to the Performance, *Learn of me, for I am meek and lowly in Heart, and ye shall find Rest unto your Souls.*

IN my following Discourse upon which Words, I shall confider these three Things:

I. THE general Command, *Learn of me.*

II. THIS Command restrained more immediately to the particular Virtue of Humility; *Learn of me, for I am meek and lowly in Heart.*

III. AN Inducement to Obedience, by a Promise subjoined to the Command, *Learn of me, for I am meek and lowly in Heart, and ye shall find Rest unto your Souls.*

OF these in their Order,

I. THEN here is a general Command, *Learn of me.*

A STATE of Sin is also a State of Ignorance; and the Understanding is proportionably clouded, whenever the Will is vitiated and depraved: And thus indeed it necessarily must be; for since the Will is influenced and determined to the Choice of any Object, by the last Dictates

states of the Understanding, it must undeniably follow, that the wrong Choice which is made by one, must proceed from a wrong Judgment that is given by the other. Whatsoever Knowledge therefore we may then seem to have, it is only of Evil, and must consequently be unlearned by us, and our Hearts presented as *Rasæ Tabulæ*, plain Tablets, that the divine Characters may be imprinted on them. Having thus fled from Evil, which is the first Step towards Perfection, we may afterwards go on (with the Royal Psalmist) and *learn to do good*: Having (according to the Apostle's Advice) *laid aside all Malice, and all Guile, and Hypocrisy, and Envy, and Evil-speakings*, we are then fitly qualified (as new born Babes) *to desire the sincere Milk of the Word, that we may grow thereby*. But as Infants are wholly incapable of improving themselves without the Assistance and Direction of those of riper Years; so it is also with the Children of the new Birth, they must be initiated and carried on by Precepts and Examples. They are but *μαθηταί*, Disciples, or Learners (as the Word implieth) nor, without a faithful Guide and able Instructor, can they possibly attain unto perfect Manhood, *unto the Measure of the Stature of the Fulness of*

Serm.

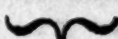
XXII.

Vol. II. of Christ. The Choece therefore of such a one being of such a wonderful Importance, in as much as an eternal State of Happiness or Misery dependeth upon it, our blessed Saviour would not leave us at Uncertainties in a Matter of such great Moment; he would not trust a Thing of so vast Concernment to the Shallowness of our empty Judgments, or the Extravagance of our capricious Fancies; but at the same Time that he injoineth us to make use of such a Guide, he also pointeth out and assigneth him to us; and when he telleth us that we must be Learners, he doeth it in these clear and easy Words, *Learn of me.* A short indeed, but full and comprehensive System of Christianity; the whole New Testament written in short Hand, and all the Precepts of the Gospel contracted into three bare Syllables, *Learn of me:* So that what our Saviour affirmeth of the first and general Rule of common Justice, *Whatsoever ye would that Men should do unto you, even so do unto them,* the same may we pronounce in favour of this short but pithy Axiom, *This is the Law and the Prophets.* It is recorded of the first and greatest of the *Cesars*, that he never used to command his Soldiers to go, but to come: he himself still leading them on, and

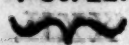
and taking the first Essay of all Dangers; *Sermon*
and certainly the Example of a Teacher *XXII*
or a Leader doth most powerfully influ-
ence the Learners and the Followers;
all Things are made easy by virtue of so
great a Precedent; and one Basket of Earth
upon a General's Shoulders shall lighten
the Weight of Thousands upon those of
private Soldiers; and yet this was the
constant Practice of the great Captain of
our Salvation: Every Action of his was a
living Sermon, some evangelical Precept
reduced to Practice; at once he com-
manded us to do, and shewed us that it
might be done; requiring nothing more
of his Disciples, than to follow when he
leadeth the Way. Doth he exhort us to
Innocence and Purity? *He did no Sin,*
neither was Guile found in his Mouth.
Doth he command us to renounce the
Vanities of this World? He first refused
all the Kingdoms of the Earth, and the
Glory of them. Doth he recommend to
us Patience and Resignation? *He was op-*
pressed and afflicted, yet he opened not his
Mouth. Doth he propose to us the Exer-
cise of Humility? *He was meek and low-*
ly in Heart. I might go on with each
particular Duty required of Christian
Professors, and shew how eminently it
was discharged by this our great Exam-
ple;

Vol. II. ple; but they are all comprehended in that divine Testimony, *That in him alone God was well pleased*; a Testimony which carrieth with it the strongest Argument imaginable for our Obedience and Imitation: To be well pleasing unto God is the End of our Creation, and the supream Felicity our Nature can arrive at, and consequently all our Thoughts, and all our Actions, ought thither chiefly to be directed. Now God, we know, *is no respecter of Persons*; that therefore which in his beloved Son was well pleasing and acceptable unto him, will most certainly be so too in us who are his Children by Adoption and Grace; we have nothing more to do, than to copy out that Example, to qualify us for a proportionable Commendation; and we need only to *learn of him to be*, with him, *well pleasing unto God*. But because the mad Presumption of some People have carried them on so far, as to aim at the Imitation of such Actions of our Saviour, as cannot possibly be the Objects of our Imitation (though God knoweth the contrary Extream is much more usual) let us inquire what Sort of Actions those are, in relation to which this Rule is given, *Learn of me*.

Some Actions our Saviour, whilst in the Flesh, performed as he was God, some

some as God and Man, some as meer Serm.
 Man. Of the first Rank was his won- XXII.
 derful Conversion of Water into Wine, 
 his commanding the Winds and the Seas,
 his raising the Dead, and others of the
 like Nature; of the second Sort was his
 miraculous Fast of forty Days and forty
 Nights, when as Man he was an hunger-
 ed, but as God he supported himself so
 long without any bodily Sustenance. Of
 the third Kind was his exemplary Humi-
 lity, Patience, Temperance, Justice, and
 the Exercise of all Christian Graces in
 their intire and absolute Perfection: The
 two former of these are so far from being
 the Objects of our Imitation, that they
 are only Matters of Admiration and Asto-
 nishment. The last then of the three Sorts
 mentioned, namely, his Practice of all
 Christian Duties, is that Scheme of Acti-
 ons, in relation to which we are com-
 manded to learn of Christ, and wherein we
 must endeavour *to be perfect, even as he was*
perfect; and therefore our Saviour, when
 he giveth us this Command, *Learn of me,*
 immediately giveth us a Sample of those
 Actions which he injoineth us to learn,
Learn of me, for I am meek and lowly in
Heart. Which leadeth me to the Con-
 sideration of

Vol. II.



II. My second General, namely, the Consideration of this Command as restrained more immediately to the particular Virtue of Humility, *Learn of me, for I am meek and lowly in Heart.*

Of all those many Graces, which like a Crown of Stars set off and adorn the Christian Profession, none shineth with greater Lustre than Humility: It is indeed the Foundation and Ground-work of all other Virtues, the first Step towards our Attainment of Perfection, and our constant Companion till we have attained it. It is the true and certain Antidote against that deadly Poison which first infected the Soul of Man; by Pride the human Nature fell, and by Humility it riseth again, literally verifying our Saviour's Assertion, *That he that exalteth himself shall be humbled, and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted.* This therefore is the first Lesson that we must learn of Christ, the earliest Rudiment of our Christian Knowledge; and certainly, if we do but seriously consider, how wonderful an Example of this Nature our Saviour gave us, we cannot have a greater Inducement to our Imitation. His very taking Flesh upon him was an Act of such infinite Condescension and Humility,

ty, that our Understanding is lost in the Sermon.
 Contemplation of it, not being able to XXII.
 fathom or comprehend it: But as if infinite Condescension were not enough, he did not only take upon him the Form of a Man, but of a Servant also; conforming himself not only to the meanest, but even to the most wretched Part of human Kind, by the Poverty of his Condition, and by the Sharpness of his Sufferings. And can we refuse to copy out so great an Original? Shall every Sect of Philosophers value themselves in following the Example of their antient Founders; and shall Christians only boggle at that President, from whom they derive that venerable Name? God forbid. But some Men may perhaps be so far mistaken, as to imagine, that in order to transcribe the Condescension of our Saviour, they must degrade themselves below the Dignity of their Nature, as he descended from the Majesty of his; that because our Saviour humbled himself from God to Man, they may debase themselves from Men to Brutes. No, my beloved Brethren, it is not such a preposterous Humility as this, that God expecteth at our Hands: The Humility that he requireth is Meekness and Lowliness in Heart; a mean Opinion of our selves,
 M which

Vol. II. which will naturally produce an Endeavour of being better; and will dignify and exalt our Nature instead of depressing it, by making us attempt to be conformed to his Likeness, and to take upon us his Image, as he hath cloathed himself with ours. Now the Image of God is Holiness, nay, it is God himself, since he condescendeth to give himself that Name, *The Lord our Righteousness*; that therefore which is most proper to advance our Holiness, is that which will most effectually resemble us to God: And certainly, amongst all the Duties enjoined the Professors of Christianity, Humility is the most likely to promote this end, since it runneth through all the divine Graces, and is either the Foundation or Support of them. I shall not weary out your Patience by enquiring into all of them, but shall confine my self to the three great Ones, Faith, Hope, and Charity; and shall endeavour to shew how mainly instrumental the Virtue of Humility is, to the cultivating and advancing of these eminent Graces. And,

I. As to Faith. It is an antient Maxim, *Oportet discentem credere*, he that would learn must come prepared to believe his Instructor; and the Reverse of it is full as true, *Oportet credentem discere*, he that would make any Progress in Faith, must

must come with an Intent and Disposition to learn: And without all doubt, for this Temper of Mind Humility is the best Preparative and Qualification; since nothing will more readily incline us to a Belief of that which is imparted to us by others, than a mean Opinion of our own Understanding. A proud Conceit of our Self-sufficiency naturally inclineth us to be tenacious of our former Opinions, to think so well of our own Knowledge, as not to suppose it capable of being bettered by the Informations of others; and but too many have been led by Principles of this Nature to defend Opinions which they themselves have known to be false, lest they should acknowledge themselves to have been at any time in the wrong. But Humility, and a low Opinion of our own Abilities, will make us give a willing Ear to that which others deliver to us: and since the Soul of Man hath a natural Tendency and Inclination to Knowledge, it must either be misled by Pride, to imagine that it already knoweth enough, or if by Humility it is made sensible of its own Defects, it must necessarily endeavour to better and improve it self. But of all sorts of Knowledge, there is none that so absolutely and indispensibly requireth Humility for its Founda-

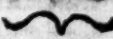
Serm.
XXII.

Vol. II. dation and Introduction, as that of the Christian Faith; the very first Element of which is a Recognition of our own Vileness, and of the deplorable Condition to which we had reduced our selves. But how hardly will the proud Man be induced to acknowledge a Doctrine of this Nature? How shall he who thinketh so well of himself, be persuaded to confess, that he is at best no other than Filth and Corruption? How shall he, who thinketh he deserveth all things, be brought to allow, that he hath no Merit of his own, and was rescued from Destruction through meer Mercy? Will he not be more apt to say with the *Pharisee*, *I thank thee, God, that I am not such a one as this*; than to cry out with the poor *Publican*, *Lord, be merciful to me a Sinner*? and therefore we find not our blessed Saviour addressing himself to the *Jewish* Sanhedrim, or to the Doctors of their Law, but to mean and illiterate Fishermen; whose most advantageous Character was a Sense of their own Insufficiency, and their Meekness and Humility their chiefest Recommendation. And indeed, where we do find any now-a-days so impiously daring as to ridicule the Mysteries of Religion, and to endeavour to make our Christian Faith contemptible,

ble, but such Men, who set up for the great Masters of Reason, and are called by themselves the Men of Wit and Parts? Miserable Creatures! that will not allow God himself to know more than they do; nay, that will rather venture to deny a God, than to acknowledge him wiser than themselves! But this mistaken *Wisdom of Men is Foolishness with God*; and the Royal Psalmist pronounceth him a Fool that is wise in his own Eyes, as well as him who hath said in his Heart, *There is no God*; so that the proud Man and the Atheist undergo the same Censure. But as we are assured by the Apostle, *that God resisteth the Proud*; so are we informed also, *that he giveth Grace unto the Humble*. Now his Grace it is, and that alone, which can fitly prepare our Souls for the due reception of those sacred Mysteries which the Christian Faith discloseth to us; which can make Christ crucified, *to the Jews a Stumbling-block, and to the Greeks Foolishness, become to us that believe the Power of God, and the Wisdom of God*. And thus much may suffice to shew, how absolutely necessary the Virtue of Humility is, for the cultivating and advancing this Grace of Faith.

2. As to Hope; it seemeth indeed at first a kind of Contradiction, to affirm,

Vol. II. that by how much the more we think
meanly of our selves, by so much the
more is our Hope well grounded: But
the Truth of this Paradox will evidently
appear upon a due and serious Considera-
tion. For since Humility hath already
been proved to be the surest Ground-
work of our Faith, and since our Faith
is that upon which our Hope is founded;
that which secureth and fortifieth the
former, must necessarily confirm and
strengthen the latter. But besides, Hu-
mility is not only a strong Preservative
against Presumption, which is one of the
Extreams of Hope, by removing that
over-weening Conceit of our selves, which
is too apt to seduce us to it; but also a
sure Defence against Despair on the other
side, which is the opposite Extream in
relation to this Grace. For Humility,
being occasioned by a just Consideration
of our selves in respect to Almighty
God, can never be unaccompanied with a
due Notion of God as well as of our
selves: now a due Notion of God will
give us a just Sense both of his Goodness
and his Truth; and so the Contempla-
tion of his Mercies and his Promises will
sufficiently secure us against Despair;
and that which removeth both these Ex-
treams,

streams, must necessarily intitle us to the Serm. XXII.
 Grace of Hope which lieth between them. For Humility, like the good 
 Ground in which the good Seed was
 sown, is always productive of Acts of
 Piety; and since it still retaineth but a
 low Opinion of its own Performances,
 it will always be endeavouring to attain
 to a higher and more exalted State of Per-
 fection: now every Advance that it ma-
 keth in the way of Godliness, giveth a
 fresh Occasion of Hope, and a just Ad-
 dition to it; and consequently this being
 a constant Spur to our Undertakings, and
 never suffering us to flag in them, must be
 a daily Confirmation of a well-grounded
 Hope, and a constant Fund for an un-
 moveable Assurance; and these Consider-
 ations will abundantly make out the
 Truth of that seeming Contradiction in
 my late Assertion, that Humility is the
 best Means to cultivate and advance this
 Grace of Hope.

3. As to Charity; this Grace of Cha-
 rity may be considered in a double Sense,
 either in relation to God, or to our
 Neighbours; in the former Acceptation
 it signifieth only an intense Love; in the
 latter, it superaddeth to that Considera-
 tion a Readiness and Desire to relieve their

Vol. II. Neceffities; but which way foever we take it, we fhall find Humility to be the main Ingredient of this divine Virtue, and the greateft Incitement to the Practice of it. And,

1.) IN relation to God; nothing can more forcibly engage, or more powerfully enhance our Love to him, than a juft Sense of our own Vilenefs. For if we could imagine that we had deferved at the Hands of God all thofe Mercies which he hath beftowed upon us, we fhould indeed find our felves obliged to fome fort of Acknowledgment; but that a very indifferent one, fince it was but in return of what we thought our due; but when we reflect, as we ought, upon our own Unworthinefs, and how we had not the leaft Title to all thofe amazing Methods of Goodnefs, which our Almighty Creator made ufe of for our Redemption; this muft certainly produce in any rational Soul as high a Degree of Love and Charity, as is capable to be entertained by us on this fide Heaven. *Greater Love than this hath no Man, faith our bleffed Saviour, than that a Man lay down his Life for his Friend:* but when Humility representeth to us, that he hath done all this for his Enemies, it will make us
lofe

lose our selves in the Contemplation of so ineffable a Love, and force us to proportion our own unto it. But, Serm. XXII.

2.) LET us consider Charity in relation to our Neighbour ; and here Humility will appear to be the greatest Motive to it imaginable. For this will tell us that we have no just Title to those many good Things wherewith we abound, that we deserve them not, and therefore ought to content our selves with less ; since we do not know, how soon the Justice of God may deprive us of what his Mercy only hath conferred upon us : thus will it root out that pernicious Principle of Self-interest, which is the greatest obstruction to Charity and Liberality. But as Humility, by giving us this low Opinion of our selves, disengageth us from our fondness to the Things of this World ; so by making us conceive worthily of our necessitated Brethren, it disposeth us to supply their Wants, and relieve their Necessities : for it maketh us consider after this manner, “ Am I better than this poor Man ? am I more holy, more mortified than he ? alas ! I am not, I am a Wretch, a Sinner : What then maketh this difference between our Conditions ? Only the Affluence of Blessings which I do not deserve : and shall I upon that

Vol. II. account ingross them to my self, and
 "see my more deserving Brother lan-
 "guish for the Want of them? Let me
 "confine my self to what I deserve, nor
 "can I in justice require a larger Por-
 "tion, let me but retrench the rest, and
 "there will be a sufficient Over-plus re-
 "maining, to supply the Occasions of my
 "distressed Brother." Thus will Humi-
 "lity make us answer all the Ends of Cha-
 "rity, either in relation to God, or to our
 Neighbours.

HAVING now considered this Com-
 mand of our Saviour, as it appertaineth
 to the particular Virtue of Humility,
 which was the Subject of my second Ge-
 neral, I proceed,

III. In the third Place, to consider the
 Inducement to our Obedience, by a Pro-
 mise subjoined to the Command; *Learn*
of me, for I am meek and lowly in Heart,
and ye shall find Rest unto your Souls. The
 Word which we here render *Rest*, is in the
 Original *ἀνέπαυσις*, which hath a more
 full Signification, and may more proper-
 ly be rendered *Ease* or *Refreshment*: so
 that the Rest here meant, doth not sig-
 nify a bare Unactivity and Cessation from
 Labour, as may appear by the Expression
of Rest unto your Souls; the Soul being of
 so

so active a Nature, as not to be capable of such a Rest; the true Meaning therefore of it is, a State of perfect Complacency and Satisfaction; and in this Sense we are promised that by Humility we shall find Rest unto our Souls. And indeed there is no one Christian Grace whatsoever, to which the Promises of both Worlds are so largely engaged, and so inseparably annexed, as to this. *Blessed are the Meek, saith our Saviour, for they shall inherit the Earth: Blessed are the poor in Spirit, for theirs is the Kingdom of Heaven.* Since therefore the Blessings both of Heaven and Earth are affixed to the Practice of this most excellent Duty, I shall endeavour to illustrate our Saviour's Assertion, by shewing how Humility is that, by which in relation both to this Life and the other, we shall find Rest unto our Souls.

I. THEN as to this Life; he who thinketh he deserveth nothing, can never suppose that he enjoyeth too little; and Contentment, which rendereth all Conditions easy and satisfactory, is the inseparable Companion of Humility. If the humble Man's Condition be eminent or lofty in the World, he receiveth these Blessings thankfully, and disperseth them abroad, as a good and faithful Steward, to the

Vol. II. the Children of the Family, the Poor
and the Distressed. If his Condition be
mean and despicable, he submitteth to it
cheerfully, and goeth through with it
contentedly. If Affliction, and Tribulation,
and Persecution, and Death it self, as-
sault him, he is still the same; since no-
thing can befall him which he thinketh
not he deserveth, and no Man can be so
miserable as not to enjoy some Blessings,
and those, how few soever, he thinketh
are more than his due. He fixeth his
Station so low, that generally the Storms
and Tempests of worldly Adversity blow
over his Head, or if they do not, he
breaketh their Force by bending with
them. Ambition, that restless Passion,
which overturneth Kingdoms, and putteth
whole Nations into Confusion, hath no
admittance into his quiet Breast: How
many Uneasinesses is he quit of, by not
conceiving himself fit for the Manage-
ment of publick Affairs; and how truly
happy doeth he make himself, by never
aiming at those Things wherein worldly
Men do generally place their Happiness!
How much Guilt as well as Trouble
doeth he avoid, by retiring within him-
self, and never concerning himself with
Things abroad? How serene are all his
Days, how quiet his Nights, how sweet
and

and uninterrupted are his Sleeps, whose Sermon
mean Opinion of himself secureth him XXII.
from the troublesome attendances of Tumult and of Business! How solid and
well-grounded is that Man's Satisfaction,
who letteth it not depend on the Applause
of others, upon Place or Preferment,
upon Riches or outward Grandeur, but
hath a Stock of Happiness within him-
self, which can neither be diminished,
nor taken from him; this is the Portion
of the contented Man, and the humble
Person is never otherwise. If therefore,
we only consider the Advantages of this
Life, it will forcibly oblige us *to learn*
of him who was meek and lowly in Heart,
that so in relation to this World *we may*
find Rest unto our Souls. But,

2. As to the other World, by the con-
stant Practice of this Duty of Humili-
ty, we shall there also *find Rest unto our*
Souls.

SINCE Heaven is a Place of Rest, that
is, of Refreshment and Satisfaction, to all
that shall be so happy as to enter into it,
we need no other Argument to convince
us that Humility will in this Sense bring
Rest unto our Souls, than reflecting a lit-
tle upon what we formerly made out,
that it is the greatest Help and Improve-
ment of all Christian Graces; since that
which

Vol. II. which forwardeth them, will certainly
 ~~~~~ conduct us thither, and put us in Possession  
 ~~~~~ of that everlasting Rest, that eternal Sabbath. But the humble Man shall find an Addition to those Heavenly Joys, which nothing but Humility can give: For how great will be the Surprise of Happiness to that Man, who always entertained a mean Opinion of his own Deserts; to find himself ranked with Martyrs and with Confessors! How ravishing will his Satisfaction be, who thought the meanest Room in those eternal Mansions too good for him, who looked upon himself as the least in the Kingdom of Heaven; when the great Master of the Feast, who loveth to exalt the humble, shall come unto him, and say, *Friend, go up higher?* What an amiable Contention will there then be between the Love of their Saviour conferring Honours on them, and the Humility of the Receivers, as it were withdrawing themselves from them, *Come ye blessed of my Father, inherit the Kingdom prepared for you, from the foundation of the World; for I was an hungered, and ye gave me Meat; thirsty, and ye gave me Drink; naked, and ye clothed me; sick and in Prison, and ye visited me: then shall the righteous answer* (and mark, I beseech you, the Humility of the Return)

turn) Lord, When saw we thee an hungred, Sermon V
 and fed thee? or thirsty, and gave thee XXII.
 Drink? When saw we thee naked, and
 clothed thee? or, when saw we thee sick
 and in Prison, and came unto thee? and
 how wonderful must their Joy be, when
 they are assured, that every such Action
 which they did to their poor Brother,
 shall be there rewarded as if done to God
 himself! Verily I say unto you, In as much
 as you have done it unto one of the least
 of these my Brethren, ye have done it unto
 me. Certainly this Humility of the Re-
 ceivers must be a vast Addition to the
 Blessings they shall then receive; and that
 Temper of Mind, which could render
 any Condition easy and satisfactory, must
 needs make this transcendently happy.
 And thus if we learn of our ever blessed
 Saviour, and endeavour like him to be
 meek and lowly in Heart, we shall certainly
 find Rest unto our Souls; not only by
 an easy and satisfactory Passage through
 this Vale of Misery, but by an uncon-
 ceivable Measure of Bliss and Happi-
 ness, when the Times of Refreshing shall
 come from before the Presence of our God:
 To which God, of his infinite Mercy,
 bring us all, through the Merits and Me-
 diation of Jesus Christ our Saviour, who
 commanded us to learn of him; for he
 was

Vol. II. *was meek and lowly in Heart; that so we might find Rest unto our Souls.*

Now to God the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, be ascribed all Honour, Power, Might, Majesty, and Dominion, henceforth and for evermore. Amen.



SERMON



SERMON XXIII.

The Nature and Excellency
of Faith considered.

MATT. xv. Part of Ver. 28.

*O Woman, great is thy Faith; be it
unto thee even as thou wilt.*

TH E History whereof these Serm.
Words are part, is one of the **XXIII.**
most remarkable in the whole
New Testament; containing
in it a wonderful Instance of
Faith and Fervency on the one side; and
a no less extraordinary with-holding
of the Blessing implored on the other side.

N

Since

Vol. II. Since therefore Examples are, at least, as prevalent as Precepts, if not more so; *since these Things were written for our Admonition, upon whom the Ends of the World are come,* it may not be improper to trace this Passage from the beginning, the unravelling of the whole Relation being very necessary towards illustrating and explaining the Text it self.

WE are told, in the twenty first Verse of this Chapter, that *Jesus* went from *Gennesaret*, and departed into the Coasts of *Tyre* and *Sidon*: That, whilst he was there, a Woman of *Canaan* came out of the same Coasts, and cried unto him, saying, *Have Mercy on me, O Lord, thou Son of David; my Daughter is grievously vexed with a Devil.* A Petition delivered with all Submission and Humility, in which she both acknowledgeth him to be her Lord, and the granting her Request to be merely Mercy; yet how unsuitable a Return doth she meet with! The blessed *Jesus*, whose Ears were always open to receive the Prayers of the Afflicted, and his Mouth to comfort and redress them, seemeth here to have forgotten the Tenderness of his Nature, the Sounding of his Bowels seem to be restrained; he passeth on, regardless of his humble Suppliant; he doeth not con-

descend

descend to take the least Notice of her; *Serm.*
 but (saith the Text) *he answered her not* XXIII.
a Word. The afflicted Woman, notwithstanding this, continueth still to implore
 his Assistance, till her Importunity obliged his Disciples to become her Inter-
 cessors; and, as if their Tenderneſs had
 been greater than their Master's, *they*
befought him, saying, Send her away, for
ſhe crieth after us. Our bleſſed Saviour,
 though he thought her not worthy of
 an Answer, yet would not leave them
 wholly without one; but ſuch a one it
 is, as is more cruel to the poor Peti-
 tioner, than even his former Silence;
 that was, indeed, a Slight and a Neg-
 lect, but this implieth an absolute De-
 nial; *I am not ſent* (saith he) *but to the*
loſt Sheep of the Houſe of Iſrael. As if he
 ſhould have ſaid, I am ſent, and there-
 fore muſt not exceed the Bounds of my
 Commiſſion; I am not ſent unto the
Gentiles, until my own reject me, and
 receive me not: This Woman, of the
 curſed Seed of *Canaan*, hath no Title to
 my Mercies; I am not ſent to her.
 With this Answer his Disciples, it ſeem-
 eth, were ſatisfied, for we do not find
 that they continued to beſeech him any
 longer; but the poor Woman was not
 yet diſheartened with this Repulſe; the

Vol. II. more he seemeth to turn away his
Face, the closer she pursueth him, and
reneweth her Entreaties proportionably
to his Denials: Before she only cried
unto him, now she falleth down and
worshipeth him, saying, *Lord, help me.*
Thou sayest that thou art sent, and thy
Commission limited; yet thou, who art
the Lord, canst not be so bounded, but that
thou mayest help me: If I lie out of
the common Road and ordinary Me-
thods of thy Mercy, yet thou canst
make me an extraordinary Instance of
thy Goodness: Thou art the Lord, and
therefore thou canst; thou art my Lord,
and therefore thou wilt help me; *Lord,*
help me. One would now imagine, that
such an humble Perseverance should ei-
ther have extorted a Consent to her Re-
quest, or, at least, have qualified the
Harshness of a Refusal: But, instead of
that, we find Reproaches, and those very
severe ones, added to the Denial. *But*
he answered, and said, It is not meet to
take the Childrens Bread, and to cast it
to Dogs; Justice is against you; my Mer-
cies are the Bread wherewith I feed my
Children; you *Gentiles*, whilst in the
State of Infidelity, are but as Dogs, com-
pared to them; it is not fitting, there-
fore, that I should take their Bread, and cast
it

it to you Dogs. Certainly, if ever the Serm. Lamb of God seemed to have laid aside **XXIII.** the Meekness of that Character, and to have put on a Temper more rigid and severe, it was in the Case of this poor Woman: Her first Addresses, though passionate and submissive, procure no Return but a silent Neglect; her reiterated Cries and Lamentations, though powerfully recommended by the Mediation of his Disciples, prevail for nothing but a peremptory Denial; the Prostration of herself before him, her Worshipping and Adoring him gain no other Requital, but a Confirmation of the former Refusal, as grounded upon Justice; and the reproachful Title of *Dog* added to it. What Hope remaineth now for this poor distressed *Canaanite*? If a Suit in these Circumstances be not quite desperate, certainly none ever can, and blessed be God, none can. For Faith, which can remove Mountains, will easily overcome all these Difficulties; nay it will raise Arguments for the obtaining our Desires, from that which seemeth most forcibly to oppose them. The Name of *Dog*, which was the most disheartning Part of the whole Adventure, she maketh the Groundwork of her Hopes; and reinforceth her Request upon that

Vol. II. Foundation: *Truth*, Lord; yet the Dogs
 ~~~~~ eat of the Crumbs which fall from their  
 Master's Table. Lord, I confess I am the  
 vilest of thy Creatures; yet even the  
 vilest have a Title to some of thy Bless-  
 ings: I am a Dog, be it so, let me at  
 least enjoy a Dog's Portion: I do not ex-  
 pect to be seated with the Children at  
 my Master's Table, to feast continually  
 upon thy Mercies; I aim no higher than  
 to lie beneath your Feet, and without  
 robbing the Children of any of their Dues,  
 only to feed upon the Crumbs that fall  
 from my Master's Table. Never did  
 Faith and Humility more fully triumph  
 than in this great Example; never did a  
 stedfast Trust and Confidence in God  
 more signally wrestle with the Almighty,  
*take Heaven by Violence*, and (as it were)  
 force from thence a Blessing, than in this  
 remarkable Instance: and now her Trial  
 is at an end; she hath fought her good Fight,  
 and is to receive the Reward of her War-  
 fare. Then Jesus answered, and said unto  
 her, O Woman, great is thy Faith; be it unto  
 thee even as thou wilt. I called thee Dog;  
 to remove that Reproach, I address to thee  
 now by the Name of Woman: I said thou  
 wert excluded from the House of Israel,  
 and hadst no Title to my Mercies; I now  
 acknowledge thee to be an Israelite in-  
 deed,

deed, a true Daughter of *Abraham*: He Serm.  
is the Father of all the Faithful, and XXIII.  
great is thy Faith: I refused to give thee  
the least Morsel of my Childrens Bread;  
now feast thy self at thy Father's Table;  
*Be it unto thee even as thou wilt.* I have in-  
sisted the longer upon these Particulars,  
because I think the whole Bible doeth  
scarce afford any one Passage more pa-  
thetical or moving; where the great Du-  
ty of Faith is more remarkably exerted,  
or the Exercise of it more signally re-  
warded. From these Words, give me  
leave to draw this plain Conclusion, as  
the Subject of my following Discourse:

THAT the due Exercise of Faith in  
God is the best Method to obtain what  
we expect or desire of him. *O Woman,*  
*great is thy Faith; be it unto thee, even as*  
*thou wilt.*

Two Things will be necessary to insist  
upon, for the right Management of this  
Proposition:

- I. To shew wherein this due Exercise  
of Faith doeth consist; and,
- II. To prove that it is the best Me-  
thod for obtaining our Desires.

I. THEN I shall endeavour to shew you  
in what this due Exercise of Faith doeth

Vol. II. consist. That Faith which will be effectual for the obtaining our Desires, doth consist in a stedfast, impartial, and practical Assent to all such Truths as are revealed to us by God.

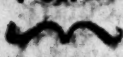
I. FIRST then, In order to a due Exercise of our Faith, our Assent to divine Truths must be stedfast.

THE certain Means to make us stedfast in our Faith, is to take all imaginable care that it be well-grounded; to lay aside all Prejudice and Partiality, and to examine nicely and warily, what Reason we have to believe so and so: for most certain it is, that the better Arguments we can bring for our being of such or such a Profession, the more firmly shall we adhere to it, and the more stedfastly shall we abide therein. And indeed it is very wonderful, to consider the wretched Carelesness of most Men, in relation to this great and valuable Concern; few having any other sort of Faith, than what they learn by rote; as if it were seated in the Tongue, and not in the Heart. But is not this a most strange and unaccountable Heedlesness? that those very Men who shall nicely pry into their Title to a small Spot of Earth, shall never concern themselves, to know, what Assurance they have of a heavenly Possession,



sion, where the *Lot is fallen to them in so fair a ground*, and behold they have a goodly *Heritage*. In this Case, they think it enough to take the Words of other People, or at most to be able to rehearse distinctly the Articles of their Belief, or slightly to run over the Heads of their Catechism; without ever prying into the true Meaning of any of them, or examining the Grounds upon which they assent to them. But alas! my Brethren, this is not all that is to be done; for God expecteth at our Hands a *reasonable Service*, and we must apply our selves to such an Exercise of Faith, as is suitable and agreeable to rational Creatures: We must not barely believe, because we are told so; for then our Faith may alter upon every contrary Information, and so be far from this Qualification indispensibly required, that it be stedfast. We must indeed give due Credit to our spiritual Instructors, because we are informed that *Faith cometh by Hearing*; but since we are assured also, that *Hearing cometh by the Word of God*, we are therefore to examine, how far their Instructions are conformable to that; and so far to assent to them, and no farther. For the Candour and Integrity of our Church is such, that it expecteth not from its Members

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Vol. II. an implicit Faith ; it is indeed necessary,  that they should believe as the Church doeth, because, God be praised for it, her Belief is rightly grounded : but to believe only because the Church believeth ; to have no other Reason for our Faith, but because it is the Faith of others ; is to be careless and indifferent where we ought chiefly to be concerned ; and to be blind in that, wherein we have most need of our Eyes. Doubtfulness and Wavering are the fatal but necessary Consequences of such a Proceeding ; and we can in this Case have no certainty of our own Stedfastness, because it is not possible to be secure of the Constancy of others. But if we duly and seriously consider the Grounds upon which our Belief is founded ; if we weigh the divine Authority by which it is recommended ; if we examine its Conformity with the Rules of right Reason ; if we find it agreeable to those great Designs of advancing God's Glory, and the Good of Mankind ; then have we gotten such a Foundation for our Faith as can never fail : since God must for ever continue to be true ; right Reason can never judge amiss ; and the Glory of God and the Good of Mankind will always be the Ends of religious Worship : then let the  
Storms

Storms and Tempests of worldly Adver- Serm.  
sities never so much assault it; let the XXIII.  
Waves and Billows of temporal Perse-  
cution never so strongly dash against it;  
yet will our Faith continue *stedfast and im-*  
*moveable*, because it is *founded upon a Rock*.  
But as it is necessary that we should have a  
good Foundation to ground our Faith upon,  
so in order to continue stedfast in it, it is  
fitting that we have a Rule to bound and li-  
mit it. *Be ye Followers of me*, saith the A-  
postle, *even as I also am of Christ*. The Gos-  
pel which he delivered is the Test of our  
Profession; and either to add to or diminish  
from it, is to charge him with Insuffici-  
ency, and to accuse his Doctrine of Im-  
perfection, either as to want, or to ex-  
cess. But some there are, who unhap-  
pily endeavour to make the Gospel of  
Christ speak as they would have it; who  
instead of bringing their own Opinions  
to this true and genuine Standard; im-  
piously stretch or contract that, as occa-  
sion requireth, to make it suit or agree  
with them. And we are not to learn  
(though the Relation carrieth Horror  
with it to a Christian Ear) that when a  
corrupt *Latin* Translation of the Bible  
began to be pryed into and exploded; it  
was turned into *Greek* by the *Pope's* ex-  
press Command; that the Majesty and Au-  
2



Vpl. II. Authority of that more antient Language might patronize and recommend those modern Imperfections. But this sure is not at all the Way to be stedfast in our Faith ; since at this rate every Consideration of the Interest of a particular Faction, every sudden Enthusiastick Notion, every gust of Fancy or of Whimsy, and every Motion of the Spirit of Delusion, shall influence our Belief, and make us stagger in our Principles. But blessed be God, through the pious Care of our primitive Reformers, we have committed into our Hands one great *αὐθεντικόν*, one true Touchstone of our Faith, the Word of God ; by which we may examine how far we should believe ; by which we may be enabled to *hold fast without wavering the Form of sound Words which is delivered to us ; for if an Angel from Heaven shall deliver any other Doctrine to us, than what is contained within that Book, let him be accursed*, saith the Apostle. And thus much for the first Qualification of our Assent to divine Truths, namely, *That it be stedfast.*

2. IN order to a due Exercise of Faith, our Assent to divine Truths must be impartial.

WE must not think, that God will allow us to believe by halves ; to take some  
 I Things,

Things, and reject others; this is not Sermon. to assent to divine Truths, because of the XXIII. Testimony of God which recommendeth them, but because they are agreeable to our own Humours. And yet this is the Fault of too many; they are willing indeed to believe all the Promises of the Gospel, but they cannot find in their Hearts to give credit to the Threatnings, and the Precepts: They are very ready to confess, that God is merciful; but they would fain persuade themselves, that he is not so strictly just: They will chearfully allow, that the heavenly *Canaan* is a pleasant Country, and it is a delightful Thing to dwell therein; but the Difficulties of the Journey thither they cannot away with: They will gladly acknowledge, that *this is a faithful Saying, and worthy of all Acceptation, That Jesus Christ came into the World to save Sinners*; but, that *they must work out their own Salvation with fear and trembling, this is a hard Saying, who can bear it?* Others there are who are willing indeed to assent to divine Truths, as far as their Senses can be the Judges of them, and human Reason can fathom and explore them; but where that short Line faileth, their Faith faileth too; and they immediately betake themselves to this Exclamation,  
*Who*

Vol. II. *Who is sufficient for these Things?* The former of these Errors is grounded upon Self-love, which will not suffer them to admit of any thing that is difficult or frightful; the latter is the Effect of Self-conceitedness, which will allow of nothing beyond its own Comprehension. But how far is this Temper of Mind from that impartial Assent which is required of us? The same divine Testimony, which informeth us, *That Life and Immortality are brought to light by the Gospel*; telleth us as positively, *That the Soul that sinneth, it shall die*: the same Authority, by which we are assured, that *our Labour shall not be in vain in the Lord*; acquainteth us also, *that we must always abound in the Work of the Lord*: and the Evidence is as strong, *that the Word was made Flesh*; as that *Jesus Christ went about doing good*: In a Word, the deepest Mysteries, the most strict Commands, and the severest Menaces, are made credible to us by as powerful Recommendations, as the plainest Passages, or the most gracious Promises. And what then can be the Reason, that they should not meet with an equal Reception? Because we will believe God no farther than we please; we are willing to take as much Religion as is agreeable to our Palates, and



and to leave the rest upon his Hands. *Sermon*  
 But can we allow God to be infinitely true? And can we suppose him more  
 worthy of Belief in one thing than another? Can we be convinced, by our Reason, that these amazing Mysteries have the divine Credentials? And can we have any Reason after to boggle at them? Is it not much more likely, that Reason should be too weak to comprehend them, than that the God of Truth should lye? Such a partial Assent as this is rather Humour than Faith: For if Faith be, as the Apostle defineth it, *the Substance of Things hoped for*, we must then be contented to follow it beyond the Bounds of moral Certainty; if Faith be *the Evidence of Things not seen*, we must then consent to make another sort of Judgment of it, than barely by our Sight: And though our Saviour complied so far with the Imbecillity of one of his Disciples, as to give him a sensible Demonstration for the confirming of his Faith; yet, in favour of the others, he pronounceth them happy, *who have believed, and yet have not seen*. There are some, I know, who think, in relation to the Threatnings and Comminations contained in Holy Writ, that they are only placed there as so many Scare-crows, without having in them any  
 real

Vol. II. real Danger ; and that the Goodness of God cannot be consistent with such eternal and intolerable Torments as are menaced therein : and this was the Error of a great Father of the Church, *Origen*, who affirmed, That through the infinite Mercy of God the Devils themselves should at length be released out of that Place of Torture. But these People do not consider, that while they seem to advance one Attribute of God, they utterly deprive him of two others ; and that in order to magnify his Mercy, they despoil him at once both of his Justice and his Truth. This is a sort of partial Faith, which is extremely dangerous, being not so much a Piece of Civility to God, as a Snare to our own Souls. In short, the Apostle assureth us, *that Charity believeth all Things* ; now this Grace, as eminent as it is, must not out-do Faith at its own Weapon. *Faith* therefore, truly so called, *believeth all Things*, that is, all such Things as have a divine Testimony, without any Cavilling or Exception, and this is the second Qualification of our Assent to divine Truths, namely, that it be impartial.

3. In order to a due exercise of Faith, our Assent to divine Truths must be practical.

FAITH,

FAITH, though it be seated in the Sermon, Heart, yet is it not so wholly and entirely confined to that, as not to influence the Actions also; for *as with the Heart Man believeth unto Righteousness, so with the Mouth Confession must be made unto Salvation.* We must not then be contented to take up with a bare historical Faith, to believe that God is just, that he is merciful, and the like; but we must apply this Faith home to our selves, and the Consideration of his Justice must make us careful not to offend him; our Acknowledgment of his Mercy must persuade us to qualify our selves to be fit Objects of it: Thus must our Faith spring forth in good Works, and must, in this Sense, resemble a Grain of Mustard-seed, in the Fruitfulness of its Nature, and the Exactness of its Increase. By Faith alone it is that we know God; but St. John pronounceth him a Liar, who saith, *he knoweth God, and keepeth not his Commandments: Hereby do we know, that we know him, if we keep his Commandments: He that saith, I know him, and keepeth not his Commandments, is a Liar, and the Truth is not in him.* This therefore must be the Manifestation of our Faith; that by thus making our Light to shine before Men, they may

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Vol. II. *may see our good Works, and glorify our*  
 *Father which is in Heaven ; and certainly,* none but the damned themselves can really be said to have *Faith without Works ;* they indeed are already in that miserable State of Darkness, of which it is said, *The Night cometh wherein no Man can work ;* and the Faith which they have is an Addition to their Torments, since they know, without being able to profit by it. But where-ever true Faith is on this side Hell, there must necessarily be good Works with it : For it is absolutely impossible, that any one should really believe there is a God, who is an infinite Rewarder of virtuous Actions, and an eternal Avenger of sinful Transgressions, and yet dare to commit the one, or to neglect the other. Either our Faith must be unstedfast, we are not fully and convincingly assured that such things are ; or it is partial, we believe only some of those Things which the Christian Religion teacheth us, without crediting the rest ; or we must needs have a practical Faith also, and endeavour to live up to what we believe. Let us consider in what a Stile God proclaimeth himself, *Exodus xxxiv. 6. The Lord, the Lord God, merciful and gracious, long-suffering, and abundant in Goodness and Truth, keeping Mer-*  
*cy*

cy for Thousands, forgiving Iniquity, and *Serm.*  
*Transgression, and Sin* (observe I beseech XXIII.  
 you the close of the whole) and that   
 will by no means clear the Guilty. Not-  
 withstanding all those Characters of Grace  
 and Mercy that go before, yet the Up-  
 shot of all cutteth off our Presumption,  
 that will by no means clear the Guilty.  
 What? Shall there be no Means to ac-  
 quit the Guilty? Shall not Thousands of  
 Rams, or ten Thousands of Rivers of Oyl?  
 Shall not the Offering of his First-born  
 compound for his Transgression? the Fruit  
 of his Body for the Sin of his Soul? No,  
 though he spake with the Tongue of Men and  
 Angels, it should profit nothing; though  
 he had the Gift of Prophecy, and under-  
 stood all Mysteries, and all Knowledge, and  
 though he had all Faith, so that he could re-  
 move Mountains, yet we are assured by the  
 Apostle, that without Charity, that is, with-  
 out practical Piety, they shall avail him no-  
 thing; he is but as sounding Brass or a  
 tinkling Cymbal. He may make a Noise  
 indeed of Religion, and may talk like a  
 Christian, but there is nothing substan-  
 tial at the Bottom, he is nothing within  
 but Hollowness and Emptiness. But in  
 the *Canaanitish* Woman, proposed for an  
 Example in the Text, we see a true and  
 genuine practical Faith, eminently fruit-

Vol. II. ful of good Works: It first breaketh forth  
 ~~~~~ in a Confession of our Saviour's being the  
 Lord and the *Messiah*, *O Lord, thou Son
 of David* : It then exerteth it self in
 the most remarkable Acts of Humility
 and Submission, *she falleth down at his
 Feet, and worshipping him* : Afterwards
 it brancheth out into fervency of Prayer,
 and constancy in Devotion, *Lord have
 Mercy upon me, Lord help me* ; and at last
 resolveth it self into a Trust and Confi-
 dence, that she shall at least obtain some
 small Share of his Mercies, and *eat of the
 Crumbs which fall from her Master's Ta-
 ble*. If then she having Faith, though
 but as a Grain of Mustard-Seed, can qua-
 lify us to command Mountains to be re-
 moved, and to be cast into the midst of
 the Sea ; well might the Greatness and
 Practicallness of her Faith intitle her to
 that unlimited Privilege, that *it should
 be unto her even as she would*. And this
 leadeth me to the Consideration of

II. MY second general Proposition ;
 namely, That the Exercise of such a
 Faith as I have already described, is the
 best Method for obtaining our Desires.

A STEDFAST Belief of the Attributes
 of God must necessarily beget in us a
 firm Trust and Reliance upon him, as
 found-

founded upon the Truth of the divine Serm. Promises; an impartial Assent to all di-
vine Truths will seal to us the Benefit of
all his gracious Overtures, without any
Omission or Exception; and a practical
Faith, productive of good Actions, qua-
lifieth us for his Favour, and intitleth us
to his Protection; and all these three to-
gether create in us a firm Dependence
upon God, with a comfortable Assurance
in relation to our selves. If we look up-
on him, this Faith will tell us, that he
is true, and therefore oblig'd; that he is
merciful, and therefore willing; that he
is powerful, and therefore able, either
to protect or deliver us: If we look upon
our selves, this will convince us, that we
are *subjectum capax*, rightly disposed for
the receiving Mercies, by the Exercise of
such a Faith, as was required in order to
them. We have two very remarkable In-
stances of the great Prevalency of Faith,
recorded in Holy Writ, to omit several
others too numerous to be inserted: the
one, of *Daniel* in the Den of Lions, of
whom the sacred Penman giveth us this
Account, *So Daniel was taken out of the
Den, and no manner of hurt was found
upon him, because he believed in his God:*
The other, of the three Children in the
fiery Furnace; of whom the Scripture

Vol. II. speaketh thus; *And the Princes, Governors, and Captains, and the King's Counsellors being gathered together, saw these Men, upon whose Bodies the Fire had no Power, nor was an Hair of their Head singed, neither were their Coats changed, nor the Smell of the Fire had passed on them; the Reason of which Deliverance is given us before, in their Answer to Nebuchadnezzar; O Nebuchadnezzar, we are not careful to answer thee in this Matter; if it be so, our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the burning fiery Furnace; and he will deliver us out of thy Hand, O King: and to these two Instances the Apostle unquestionably referreth, when he telleth us concerning the Prophets, That by Faith they stopped the Mouths of Lions, and quenched the Violence of Fire. Since therefore we see that Faith can allay the Rage, and curb the Fury of the most ravenous Creatures, as well as stop the Rage of the most devouring Element, we may easily conclude, that all things are feasible unto it, that with it nothing is impossible. And indeed, can we think it ungenerous in a Man, to baulk those of Assistance, that rely upon him for it; and shall we cast such Imputations upon God, as we our selves would scorn to lie under? The Wise Man assureth*

assureth us, *that the faithful Man shall abound with Blessings*; the Prophet telleth us, *that the just shall live by Faith*; the Apostle informeth us, *that through Faith we are saved*; nay, our blessed Saviour himself confirmeth the same in these Words, *Thy Faith hath saved thee*. This therefore, having a divine Testimony, requireth our hearty Assent unto it; and we have as much Reason to believe that God will answer our Desires, if we are qualified by Faith for the obtaining of them; as we have to believe that there is a God of Truth. And now, since we are compassed about with such a Cloud of Witnesses, let us hold fast the Profession of our Faith without wavering, for he is faithful that hath promised; and being persuaded, as our Saviour assureth the Father of the Child that was possessed, *that all things are possible to him that believeth*, let us all join with him in his hearty Confession; *Lord, I believe; help thou my Unbelief*. That therefore we may have a just Title to the absolute fulfilling of all our lawful Desires, grant unto us, Almighty God, the Gift of Faith, the Graces of Patience, Humility, and Resignation, which so eminently shine forth in this great Example; that so being duly qualified for the pouring out of

Vol. II. our Souls before thee, both the Words of
 our Mouths, and the Meditations of our
 Hearts, may be always acceptable in thy
 Sight, O Lord, our Strength, and our
 Redeemer : and thou most blessed *Jesus*,
 who wouldest not *take the Childrens Bread*
and cast it to Dogs, grant that we all, who
 now design to partake of thy Body and
 Blood, may be so prepared for the due
 Reception of these sacred Mysteries, that
 we may be intitled to the Place and Pri-
 vilege of Children (not of Dogs) at our
 Master's Table : that so feeding on thee
 here by Faith with Thanksgiving, it
may be unto us hereafter even as we will,
 namely, that we may possess thee in that
fulness of Joy wherein thou now fittest at
 the Right Hand of the Father, *Thrones*
and Powers and Principalities being sub-
jected to thee.

Now to God the Father, Son, and Holy
Ghost, be ascribed all Honour, Power,
Might, Majesty, and Dominion, hence-
forth and for evermore. Amen,



SERMON



SERMON XXIV.

Relieving the Poor a profitable Charity.

JAMES ii. Verse 15 and 16.

If a Brother or Sister be naked, and destitute of daily Food ; And one of you say unto them, Depart in Peace, be you warmed and filled ; notwithstanding ye give them not those Things which are needful to the Body ; what doth it profit ?

CHARITY is the greatest and Serm.
 most eminent of all Christian XXIV.
 Graces ; preferred by the A-
 postle before Faith, which is
 the Basis of our Religion ; and
 Hope, which confirmeth Believers in the
Pro-

Vol. II. Profession of the Faith; *the greatest of these* (saith he, when he had reckoned them all up) *is Charity.* All the other Gifts and Graces of the Spirit are transient and decaying, this only is permanent and lasting; *whether there be Prophecies, they shall fail; whether there be Tongues, they shall cease; whether there be Knowledge, it shall vanish away; but Charity never faileth.* It is this which must be joined with every other Excellency, to make it valuable in the Sight of God; for *though one spake with the Tongue of Angels, and though he had all Knowledge, and all Faith, and though he gave his Body to be burnt, and had not Charity, it should profit him nothing.* Some good Works follow us to the Gates of Heaven, and some go before us, and wait there for us, but none hath the Privilege of entering in with us but Charity; this maketh up a part of our everlasting Felicity; and is only improved in its Degree, not altered in its Nature. There is no Faith in Heaven, where there is perfect Vision; there is no Hope in Heaven, where there is entire Fruition; but Charity is so necessary an Ingredient of Happiness, that Heaven could not be a Place of Joy, if that were absent: it maketh indeed a kind of Heaven upon Earth,

Earth, where it is duly practised; and Serm. rendreth all those who are conversant XXIV. in it, so many Angels to one another. ~~~~~

These ministring Spirits are always loving and careſſing one another, and ſupplying the Neceſſities of us that want: their conſtant Entertainment is to do Good; and nothing can better qualify us for their Society and Converſation, than to imitate them in that Employment. In a Word, this exactly reſembleth us to God, who is the univerſal Benefactor; nay, it uniteth us to him, and maketh us one with him; *for God is Love, and he that dwelleth in Love, dwelleth in God, and God in him.* Such and ſo great are the Privileges of this moſt excellent Chriſtian Duty; which I have the rather choſen to inſiſt upon at preſent, upon account of the ſeveral Briefs that lie before us, and muſt ſucceſſively be offered to your Chriſtian Conſideration. Againſt the want of this Grace in one of its moſt conſiderable Branches, the Apoſtle here cautioneth us in the Words of my Text; expoſing thoſe faint and uſeleſs Pretenſions, with which ſome People endeavour to excuſe themſelves, under their groſs Omiſſion of its more ſubſtantial Performance; being contented to pity the Neceſſities of their Brethren, and to profeſs

Vol. II. a Fellow-feeling of the Miseries they lie under; but resolving to shew their Compassion the cheapest Way, by an ineffectual Prayer, or cold good Wishes; without suffering their Charity to proceed any farther; to be either expensive to themselves, or beneficial to others, by imparting such things *as are needful to the Body*. This is that unprofitable pretended Charity, which the Apostle here endeavoureth to discountenance; assuring us (according to the Idiom of the Original Language, in which the Question implieth a strong Negation) that a few fair Words, and formal good Wishes, when we are able and obliged to do something farther; as they bring no manner of Advantage to the wanting Party, so neither do they intitle the Giver to any Reward, but will to both of them prove equally useless and insignificant. *If, saith he, a Brother or Sister be naked, and destitute of daily Food; and one of you say unto them, Depart in Peace, be you warmed and filled; notwithstanding ye give them not these Things which are needful to the Body; what doth it profit?*

In my following Discourse upon which Words, I shall insist upon these two Particulars:

I. I SHALL

I. I SHALL explain the Nature of this Duty, as it relateth to those Circumstances which are specified in my Text.

II. I SHALL consider the Force of those Inducements which are there laid down to oblige us to its Practice.

I. I SHALL explain the Nature of this Duty, as it relateth to those Circumstances which are specified in my Text.

AND here, that I may not enter upon too copious a Subject, I shall not divide this large and spreading Duty into its several comprehensive Branches, of Love to God, and to our Neighbour; nor shall I insist upon the usual Subdivision of the latter, into Charity for their Souls, and Charity for their Bodies; but shall only consider that Part of it, which is conversant about the temporal Necessities of our Brethren, it being that to which the Text more immediately referreth, and shall proceed to explain the Nature of it, according to the Method here made use of by the Apostle; by shewing you,

1. NEGATIVELY, wherein it doeth not consist; and,

2. POSITIVELY, wherein it doeth.

I. THEN,

Vol. II. I. THEN, that sort of Charity, of which we now treat, is explained here Negatively, by shewing wherein it doeth not consist.

THE Apostle here informeth us, that the Exercise of this Duty doeth not consist in a seeming Concern for the Extremities of others, in unprofitable good Wishes, or an unfruitful Compassion; and that it is not enough to denominate a Man charitable, that he is touched with the Miseries of his Fellow-creatures, and hath some sort of feeling of their Wants and Necessities: for he must put off his Humanity, as well as his Religion; must cease to be a Man as well as a Christian, who is not thus far affected with the Calamities of his Brethren; and he that is wholly unconcerned for the distressed Estate of the Naked, and the Hungry, is fit only to converse with Wolves and Tygers, being degenerated into a Nature that is brutal and savage: But this is a Barbarity of which few can be guilty, and which therefore the Apostle taketh no notice of here, levelling his Caution against the more plausible Failure; which seemeth indeed to comply with the Dictates of good Nature, but falleth vastly short of a true Christian Charity; being equally useless and unprofitable both to the Giver and Receiver:

ceiver: For what manner of Comfort or **Serm.**
 Advantage can arise to those distressed **XXIV.**
 and miserable Creatures, whose Wants
 cry aloud for a substantial Relief, when
 they meet with a Compassion so empty
 and unavailable, as extendeth no farther
 than a tender Expression? How shall
 they, who are doubly starved with Hun-
 ger and with Cold, be fed with the Air
 of a few soft Words, or defended from
 the Weather by so thin a Texture? How
 soon will the empty Sound of them be
 drowned in the noisy Cravings of an un-
 satisfied Stomach? and how little will
 it appease the Grumbling of the Belly,
 which is therefore said *to have no Ears?*
 it only serveth to revive the Memory of
 their Miseries, which they resent too
 feelingly to be capable of forgetting
 them; it openeth their Wounds, without
 pouring in the Balsam; and abundantly
 verifieth the Apostle's Charge, that in re-
 lation to them, *it doth not profit.* But
 neither will it be more profitable to us;
 nor shall we reap any greater Advantage
 from a Proceeding so unanswerable to
 what is expected. For when we are
 commanded to do good to others, shall
 we think it sufficient that we barely wish
 it? nay, do we not convince our selves
 of the grossest Hypocrisy, by pretending
 to

Vol. II. to desire what we refuse to forward, and letting our Actions contradict our Expressions? He that seriously and heartily wisheth that his wanting Brother were warmed and filled, will also minister to him Food and Rayment; according to the Proportion of his own Ability; and those Desires can never be sincere, that are unattended with suitable Performances; unless where the Person is wholly incapable, and utterly destitute of the Power to assist; in that Case, and in that alone, God will accept the Will for the Deed; and a Man may be charitable without imparting: And yet how many are there, who satisfy themselves with this empty Shadow of Mercy and Compassion, who mistake in this, as they do in other Duties, flattering themselves that they have reached its Perfection, when they feel but the lightest Dispositions towards it? They can be contented to put on this Appearance of Charity, which carrieth no Trouble or Expence along with it; can willingly impart the Treasure of their Wishes, which cost them so little to coin and to distribute; will buy off the Clamour of their loud Petitioners, if a few fair Words can make the Purchase; and will readily wish that they were *warmed and filled*, in order to

persuade them to *depart in Peace*: but *Serm.*
 this is so far from the performance of our *XXIV.*
 Duty, that it is only an Evidence of its
 wilful Omission; it testifieth against us,
 that we are sensible of their Wants, and
 yet unchristianly withhold a charitable
 Relief; and is so far from bringing us
 any Profit or Reward, that it only en-
 haunceth our Guilt and Condemnation.
 If then the mildest and most obliging
 Answer is not sufficient of it self to dis-
 charge this Duty, how infinitely short of
 it do those Men fall, who pour Vinegar
 instead of Oyl into the Wounds of others;
 who add to the Miseries of the Poor and
 Needy, by rigid Expressions, and a rough
 Demeanour; and instead of that faint
 Charity of bidding them *depart in Peace*,
 drive them violently from their Doors,
 with Reproaches and Execrations! A
 Piece of Inhumanity so unbecoming a
 Christian, that it might justly look like a
 scandalous Aspersion, did not too fre-
 quent an Experience convince us of its
 Truth, and sufficiently prove that the
 rich Man in the Parable was not the on-
 ly Person that might be tutored by his
 Dogs. And thus much for the negative
 Explanation of this Duty, or the shew-
 ing wherein it doeth not consist. But,



II. THAT sort of Charity of which we now treat, is explained here also positively, by shewing wherein it doeth consist.

THE Apostle informeth us, that the due Performance of this most excellent Duty consisteth in imparting to such as are in want, *those things which are needful to the Body*; this is the proper Exercise of that Grace, by which great Profit and Advantage will redound, both to the Objects and the Practitioners of it. For how sensible and moving a Satisfaction must it be, to one that was just sinking under the Pressure of his Necessities, to find himself buoyed up by a seasonable Relief? How sweet is that Morsel to the hungry Soul, which sustaineth it when just yielding to the Assaults of Famine? and how pleasant that Covering to the naked Body, which armeth it against the pinching Inclemencies of the Weather? Not all the studied Luxury of artificial Tables, not all the Pomp and Pageantry of the most splendid Equipage, can administer such real and substantial Comfort, can confer so solid and considerable an Advantage, when employed in the Gratification of the Vain and Ambitious, as the most homely Entertainment, and the coarsest Cloath-
ing,

ing, if applied to the Refreshment of the Serm. Wanting and Necessitous. We are not XXIV. fully sensible of the Worth of any Blessing, till we learn its Value by being deprived of it; and the vast *Epicurism* of a seasonable Meal, or convenient Raiment, is never truly understood but by the Hungry and the Naked: then the Spirits which before were restive and unactive, begin to play about with Liveliness and Vigour; then the Blood circulateth with a chearful Motion, which before was almost frozen within its Channels; and the Man admireth to feel himself revived, as if Life and an Alms had been imparted to him together. But what may be yet reckoned as a greater Advantage, is the spiritual Benefit which may probably accrue, upon the happy receiving of a well-timed Charity; all those Temptations to which Persons are exposed, who are oppressed with the Burthen of an unrelieved Poverty, will upon such an occasion vanish and disappear; and a Sense of the divine Goodness, and a Reliance upon it, will happily succeed them: No Murmurings or Repinings against the Dispensations of Providence, no Endeavours of subsisting by unlawful Means, can justly take Place in such a Man's Mind, who findeth that God can

Vol. II. make him a Provision in due Season, and
supply his Necessities without his Sin: thus will it eminently conduce to his Profit, and advance both his temporal and eternal Welfare, to have such Things imparted as are *needful to the Body*. Nor is the Advantage narrowly confined to him only that receiveth these Offices of Mercy; but reflecteth strongly upon the Dispenser of them, and repayeth his Charity with considerable Interest. For I appeal to the Experience of the Merciful and Compassionate, whether ever they were conversant in any Employment that afforded so pure and unmixed a Delight, as resulted from the Performance of this most pleasant Duty; and therefore it is almost impossible, that he who hath been once charitable, should ever cease to be so; the Satisfaction which it affordeth being sufficient to engage him, were there no other Reward consequent to its Practice. But can any thing more exalt or dignify our Nature, than to share with Providence in that great Employment, of administering to the Support and Maintenance of others? To be God's immediate Instrument in conveying to them the necessary Comforts and Conveniences of Life? Can any thing more exactly resemble us to our Saviour, *who went*

went about continually doing good, and relieving the Wants and the Infirmities of his Creatures? Can any thing appear more pleasing or delightful, than to hear the deserved Acknowledgments of the Poor, and the Echo of their Prayers for their obliging Benefactors? To see the undissembled Expressions of their Gratitude, and the lively Motions of a Joy that is genuine and hearty? But above all, can any Entertainment be more ravishing, than to reflect that this Employment, which is so agreeable to us, is equally well-pleasing and acceptable to God, and that we reconcile at once our Interest and our Pleasure? That we are now securing an immortal Reversion, *are laying up for our selves Treasures in Heaven*, are obliging God himself to become our Debtor, and are cheaply purchasing an unvaluable Possession? Yet these are the Advantages which will certainly redound to him that is duly conversant in this Duty; and God will crown with Joy both his Soul and Spirit, who imparteth to such as want, *things needful for the Body*. And thus much for the positive Explication of this Duty, or shewing wherein it doeth consist; which was the latter Branch of my first General, which was to explain the Nature of this Duty

Vol. II. of Charity, as it relateth to those Circumstances which are specified in my Text. I proceed to the Consideration of

II. My second General, namely, To consider the Force of those Inducements, which are there laid down to oblige us to its Practice.

As there is not any amongst all the Christian Graces, which is so frequently and so warmly recommended as this; so is there none in whose behalf more powerful Arguments may be produced; none hath more strong or persuasive Motives, to engage us to be conversant in the Exercise of it. But these are too numerous to be insisted upon particularly, and therefore I shall wholly wave them at the present, and shall not make mention of any other Inducements for our imparting those *things that are needful to the Body*, but those two Considerations contained in my Text;

1. Of the Nearness of that Relation which is between us and the wanting Persons, that they are our Brethren and our Sisters.

2. Of the Miserableness of their Condition, that they are naked, and destitute of daily Food.

1. THEN,

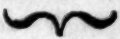
I. THEN, the Consideration of the Serm. Nearness of that Relation which is between us and the wanting Persons, that they are our Brethren and our Sisters, should forcibly oblige us to the Exercise of Charity, or to give them *those things which are needful for the Body.* XXIV.

GOD the Father, who is the God of Unity and Love, and is desirous to unite the whole Race of Mankind in indissoluble Bonds of Amity and Friendship; made at first of one Blood all the Nations of the Earth; that by so near a Relation he might fasten their Affections, and tye and rivet them to one another. Thus we are all the Children of one common Parent, we are all the Workmanship of one great Creator, and the equal Care of one watchful Providence; and therefore for such as are wealthy and powerful to withdraw their Assistance from the Needy and Impotent, is a Piece of Cruelty as unjust and unnatural, as if the eldest Brother of some rich Family should hug himself in the Enjoyment of a plentiful Patrimony; whilst the younger Branches are perishing for want, without his stretching out his Hand to help or relieve them: such and so great is our Obligation to supply the Necessities of the Poor and Needy, if we only consider them as Fel-

Vol. II. low-creatures, and look upon them as
 our Brethren by Creation. But farther,
 God the Son, the great Example and Pro-
 moter of Charity; when he perfected
 the Work of our Redemption, did joint-
 ly incorporate all his Followers, and
 make them Members of one mystical Bo-
 dy: thus all of us are Bone of one ano-
 ther's Bone, and Flesh of one another's
 Flesh; that so whether one of us suffer, or
 be honoured, the rest of us might mourn,
 or rejoyce, along with him; and there-
 fore for those who are in better Circum-
 stances, to be regardless of such whose Con-
 dition is more miserable, is every whit as
 strange and unaccountable, as if the Hand
 should refuse to provide for the Belly, or
 the Eyes deny to direct the Feet; as if
 every Member should set up for itself, and
 act independently from one the others: for
 equal is the Obligation that lies upon us,
 to be mutually assisting to one another;
 since we are all Members of that Body,
 of which Christ is the Head, and are most
 strictly related as Brethren by Redemp-
 tion. But farther yet, God the Holy
 Ghost, who is the great Inspirer of Love
 and Concord, and whose chief and pecu-
 liar Employment it is, to advance the
 strict Fellowship and Communion of
 Saints; hath united us more nearly than
 I into

into one Body, by joining us together in Serm.
one Soul and Spirit. Thus all of us should XXIV.
be acted by the same Affections, all of us
should be sensible of the same Impressions;
and the same Mind should be in every one
of us, whether to will or to do: and
therefore for those whose Station is more
eminent, to neglect such others as are
mean or indigent, is a Proceeding as
preposterous and absurd, as if the Un-
derstanding should scorn to guide the
Will, or the Judgment refuse to give As-
sistance to the Memory; as if the ruling
Faculties of the Soul should deny to con-
tribute to the Advantage of the inferior
ones: For no less pressing is our Obli-
gation, to administer chearfully to the
Necessities of others; since we are all
Partakers of the same Spirit, and most
closely related to one another, as Brethren
by Sanctification. Thus every Person of
the blessed Trinity layeth upon us a di-
stinct and particular Engagement to assist
and relieve one another as Brethren,
twisting together *a threefold Cord* of Love,
which the Wise Man telleth us is *not*
easily to be broken. And now is it not a
Matter of most just Astonishment, that
any one should be able to disentangle him-
self from such strong and powerful En-
gagements as these; and that an uncha-
ritable

Vol. II. ritable Man should not be as rare, and as hard to be met with as other Monsters? But let such a one assure himself, whoever he be, that his Danger is full as great as his Guilt, and that his Proceedings are as destructive as they are provoking; he forfeiteth all Title to the Protection of his Creator, who hath not a due Concern for his Fellow-creatures; nor can he justly expect, that God should look down upon him with an Eye of Mercy, if he regardeth not his own Brethren upon an equal Level: He disclaimeth all Pretensions to the Favour of his Redeemer, who hath no true Compassion for his afflicted Members; nor can he hope to be made Partaker of his inestimable Merits, if he refuseth to impart his own worthless Advantages, to such as bear the Character of his adopted Brethren: He breaketh off all Commerce with the immaculate Spirit, who rejecteth the Care of those whom he vouchsafeth to make his Temples; and must never hope to feel his unspeakable Conso-lations, if he withholdeth such Refreshments as he is capable to bestow, from those that he hath listed into the Brotherhood of the Faithful. These Considerations should effectually persuade us to shew Charity to the Bodies of one another,
that

that so we may make the Return expected, *Serm.*
for the wonderful Expressions of God's **XXIV.**
Love to us. But, 

2. THE Consideration of the Misera-
bleness of their Condition, who are the
Objects of our Charity, that *they are na-
ked, and destitute of daily Food*, should
forcibly oblige us to the Exercise of this
Duty, to *give them those things which are
needful to the Body.*

HE that is not affected so fully as
he ought, with the Wants and Mife-
ries of his necessitated Brethren, would
do well to convince himself, by an easy
Experiment, of the Severity of those
Hardships, to which they are exposed:
Let him that is not touched with a be-
coming Sense of the Sharpness and Extre-
mity of his Brother's Hunger, deny him-
self the Plenty of some successive Meals,
and be deaf to the Calls of his importu-
nate Appetite; till the eager Cravings of
his own Stomach teach him to give Ear
to all hungry Supplicants; and the Con-
traction of his Bowels, for want of Food,
obligeth him to enlarge them to such as
need it. Let him who hath a Heart less
sensible than it should be, of the bitter
Necessities of his naked Brother, expose
sometimes his uncovered Body to the
rough Encounters of the cutting Air; till
the

Vol. II. the chilling of his Blood maketh his Charity grow warm; and the trembling of his own Flesh effectually intercede with him in the Behalf of his shivering Petitioners: Thus if we would acquaint our selves with the Sufferings of others, and let our selves down into the Depth of their Miseries; it would effectually persuade us to commiserate their Afflictions, and chearfully to endeavour their Releasement from them. But whilst, on the contrary, we indulge our Bodies, and continually allow them in Luxury and Ease; the Ideas which we have of our Neighbours Extremities, will be very distant from the Truth, and will consequently make the Measures of our Charity extreamly disproportionable to the Occasions of it. The luxurious *Epicure*, in the midst of his Intemperance, is, perhaps, apprehensive of the Dangers of Excess, and of those Uneasinesses which a Surfeit may draw after it; but giveth only a faint Guess at the Miseries of the Hungry, or how grievous it is to want the Refreshment of a Meal: And the shining Gallant, who prideth himself in his Finery, and is dotingly enamoured with the Beauty of his Dress, can but darkly conjecture what the Naked endure, and judge blindly of a Condition so different from his own; for

for it is more than probable, that if they Serm.
were truly sensible of the Weight of their XXIV.
Calamities, they would be touched with
so kindly a Fellow-feeling of their Sufferings, as would persuade them to re-
trench from their own Extravagances, to
supply the Necessities of the poor and
needy; and were that but practised uni-
versally, throughout this fruitful and
wealthy Kingdom; would we sometimes
but spare an unnecessary Dish, and at
other Times leave off an affected Piece of
Finery, we might so provide for the
Poor (as numerous as they are) as that
none of them need to be naked, or desti-
tute of daily Food: And how pleasing a
Sacrifice of a sweet smelling Savour,
would this be to God, our common Fa-
ther? How would one small Part, thus
charitably employed, sanctify the Re-
mainder to our own Enjoyment? And
how much more truly a Comfort would
our Plenty then be, when accompanied
with the Prayers and Blessings of those
that we have relieved, than when it is
blasted with the Curses of the Poor, and
poisoned with the neglected Complaints
of the Hungry? These Considerations
should forcibly engage us readily to
impart, unto all such as want, those
Things which are needful to the Body;
upon

Vol. II. upon account of the Miserableness of
 ~~~~~ their Condition, that they are naked, and  
 ~~~~~ destitute of daily Food.

Thus have I gone over those two general Heads, which I laid down as the Subject of my present Discourse; and have explained, in the first, the Nature of the Duty enjoined by the Apostle, according to the Method made use of in my Text; by first shewing, negatively, that it doeth not consist in uneffectual Wishes, and an empty Commiseration; And, Secondly, positively, that it doeth consist, in imparting such *things as be needful for the Body*. I have next enquired, in my second General, into such Inducements to the Practice of this Duty, as the Words of my Text do plainly offer; and those you have been told, were, first, the Consideration of our near Relation, that the Poor are our Brethren, and our Sisters; and, Secondly, a Reflection upon the Misery of their Circumstances, that they are naked and destitute of daily Food. Give me leave to add briefly a Word or two of Exhortation, and so I shall conclude.

THE daily Objects of Compassion which we every where meet with in these Times of Difficulty, are both so moving and so numerous, that unless our Hearts
 are

are as hard as the nether Mill-stone, Sermon. XXIV.
they must necessarily melt into Tender-
ness and Mercy. Some there are who
have lost their most eminent Support-
ers, in the Persons of their Parents or
their Husbands, and are now left desti-
tute of all worldly Consolation; having
no other Dependence for their daily Sub-
sistence, but upon God the Father of
the Fatherless, and the Husband and
Comforter of the Widow: others have
been reduced by the Dearness of Provi-
sions, and have their Stocks exhausted by
those extravagant Rates, which the Wick-
edness of some People hath rather kept
up, than any real Scarceness of the Com-
modities themselves: others have been
visited by the Hand of God, and brought
to the utmost Necessity by Casualties or
by Sicknes, and miserably languish up-
on the Beds of their Infirmary; at once
unable to relieve themselves, or to stir
out and implore the Charity of others:
and too many, I fear, their own Idle-
ness hath brought to taste the sad but de-
served Consequences of it; and they are
now undergoing a severe Penance for
the Looseness and Mismanagement of
their former Lives. But whatsoever the
Causes or Occasions are, the Necessities
of a Multitude are extremely pressing,
and

Vol. II. and we have Examples of very many that miserably languish, for want of a sufficient seasonable Assistance: Let us all, I beseech you, join our hearty Endeavours, to remove such a Scandal from a Christian Country; let us away, in the Name of God, with all needless Superfluities; however small a Guilt they might formerly contract, I am sure they can have no pretence to Innocence, while the Extremities of our Fellow-Christians are so very clamorous, and call upon us so loudly for whatever we can spare: Let us all consider those who labour beneath their Necessities, under the affectionate Characters of our Brethren and our Sisters, and seriously lay to Heart the Sadness of their Condition, who are naked and destitute of daily Food; so shall we not think that we have done sufficient, if we send them from us with a few good Words, if we bid them *Depart in Peace, be warmed, and be filled*; but shall find our selves obliged to give largely to their Relief, and to *impart those things which are needful to the Body.*

Now to God the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, be ascribed all Honour, Power, Might, Majesty, and Dominion, henceforth and for evermore. Amen.

S E R M O N



SERMON XXV.

Peace and Friendship due
to all Men.

R O M. xii. Verse 18.

*If it be possible, as much as lieth in
you, live peaceably with all Men.*

WHATEVER Tumults and Disorders, whatever Discords and Confusions we may chance to meet with in this World, it is most certain they have not their Rise and Original from the peaceful and amicable Gospel of the Blessed *Jesus*; who was so far from encouraging them by his Doctrine, or his Example, that all his

Serm.
XXV.

Q

Words

Vol. II. Words and Actions were Lessons of Charity and Brotherly-kindness; his proper Title was *the Prince of Peace*; and the very Design of his coming into the World was, next and immediately after God's Glory, to promote *Peace upon Earth, and Good-will amongst Men*. Hence he assureth us, *that he was meek and lowly in Heart*, which is the Foundation and Ground-work of a peaceable Disposition; hence we are informed in relation to him, *that when he was reviled, he reviled not again; when he suffered, he threatned not*; and hence it is, *that, by his Apostles, he enjoineth all Christians to have Compassion of one another, not rendering evil for evil, or railing for railing; but contrariwise, blessing; because that so is the Will of God, that with well-doing we may put to silence the Ignorance of foolish Men*. Yet alas! notwithstanding all these Obligations from our most holy Profession, where is Peace a greater Stranger, than it is amongst those who call themselves Christians? How have they laid aside the Harmlesness of Lambs, and the Innocence of Doves, for the Savageness and Fury of Wolves and Vultures? How do they strive, by all Acts of Calumny, Rapine, and Oppression, to ruin the Fortunes, the Lives, and Reputations of one another?

another? but this is far from the De-
meanor prescribed to us in the Gospel; Serm. XXV.
for that is *first pure, then peaceable and*
gentle; far from the Advice here given
us by the Apostle, that *if it be possible, as*
much as lieth in us, we should live peace-
ably with all Men.

In my following Discourse upon which
Words, I shall insist upon these three
Particulars:

I. I SHALL consider the Duty here en-
joined, *Live peaceably.*

II. THE Universality, and Extent of
it; *Live peaceably with all Men.*

III. THE Limitations of it, implying
in some Cases a Dispensation from
it, two ways expressed; *If it be*
possible, and as much as lieth in you,
live peaceably with all Men.

I. THEN I shall consider the Duty en-
joined; *Live peaceably.*

NOTHING can be more seasonably
urged, in a clamorous and invective Age,
when we have so many Factions and Di-
visions in the Publick, so many private
Contentions and Animosities, than such
Arguments as may enforce the Duty in
my Text, of *living peaceably.* Peace and
Amity being the very Soul and Life of
the

Vol. II. the World; *as necessary* (saith the Philosopher) *to the Well-being of it, as Fire and Water*; we may as well want those needful Elements, as to be deprived of mutual Love and Friendship. For this is the great Advantage of our human Nature, the happy Prerogative of a rational Being, the Band and Cement of Society and Conversation: This is the truest Imitation, and exactest Resemblance of our Saviour; the proper Badge and Ornament of a Christian, who ought to be most eminently distinguished from all other Professors by this Characteristick; *By this shall all Men know that ye are my Disciples, if ye have Love one for another*, for where-ever there is a true Church of Christ, a Spirit of Charity must visibly reign in it: This being the particular Mark of his adopted Brethren; *Blessed* (saith our Saviour) *are the Peace-makers, for they shall be called the Children of God.* This then being a Blessing so necessary and advantageous, it is as much our Interest as our Duty, *to live peaceably with all Men.* For the attaining of which desirable end, let us make use of the following Method:

1. LET us endeavour to secure to our selves the comfortable Advantage of an inward Peace.

2. LET

2. LET us apply our selves to the Serm. Practice of such Duties, as are most emi- XXV. nently instrumental to the promoting of Peace outwardly ; and,

3. LET us reflect upon the weighty Obligations, which strongly persuade us to live peaceably, both as we are Men, and as we are Christians.

1. THEN in order to the attainment of this End, we must endeavour to secure to our selves an inward Peace : for unless we are at Peace with our own Souls, it is impossible that ever we should be at Peace with others ; as we are positively and expresly informed by St. James ; *Whence (saith he) come Wars and Fightings among you ? come they not from hence, even from your Lusts that war in your Members ?* It is an antient and undoubted Maxim, *Nulla est amicitia inter malos*, There is no such thing as Friendship amongst evil Men ; and this, we know, is the Fountain and Foundation of Peace and Tranquillity, without which it can neither be established, nor upheld : and indeed there is great Reason for this Axiom ; for the wicked Man being wholly addicted to the pleasing of himself, and being confined within the narrow Limits of Self-love and Self-interest ; hath no other Respect to the Advantages of Society,

Vol. II. ciety, or to the Good of others, but as they are subservient to his own Designs, as they either contribute to his Pleasure, or his Profit: to the Good and Virtuous he is an open and professed Enemy; since there can be no Grounds for Friendship or for Commerce, between Persons whose Maxims are so opposite and contradictory; he looketh upon them as so many outward Consciences which incessantly reproach him; telling him by their Example what he ought to do, and silently upbraiding him for not doing accordingly; and he looketh upon his fellow-Sinners with an Eye of Jealousy; because they are his Rivals, in the two great Designs he proposeth to himself, the advancing his Pleasure, or his Interest: thus can he never be at Peace with others, because he is at Enmity with God and himself; *There is no Peace, saith my God, to the wicked.* But he whose Mind is in a perfect Calm, without any sudden Gusts of Passion, to ruffle and discompose it; whose inward Quiet is not disturbed by violent Engagements of contending Lusts, or rude Assaults upon Conscience and right Reason; who hath no secret Lashes of Conscience to torment him, no Soreness or Festering of inward Wounds; this is the Man who is fitly qualified for living

peace-

peaceably with all Men else, because he is at Peace with God and his own Soul; and he abundantly verifieth the Prophet's Prediction, *That the Work of Righteousness shall be Peace, and the Effect of Righteousness Quietness and Assurance for ever.* But,

Serm.
XXV.

2. IN order to our exercising this Duty of living peaceably, we must apply our selves particularly to the Practice of such Virtues, as are most eminently instrumental to the Promotion of it outwardly. Now amongst the whole Catalogue of Christian Graces, the two great Duties of Humility and Charity, are the surest and most infallible Means for attaining to and preserving an outward Tranquillity: The former of these hindereth us from being injurious to others; and the latter disarmeth our Resentments, when others are so to us; the one inspireth us with a mean Opinion of our selves, the other teacheth us to think well of all Men else; this maketh us careful to pay a due Respect abroad, that hindereth us from repining when it is not repaid at home; and both make up that peaceful and amicable Temper, which will neither suffer a Man to give Offence, nor to take it. These will make us chearfully undergo those uneasy Offices, which must

Vol. II. be performed for the Attainment of Peace;
 ~~~~~ one while we are to study all Things,  
 that may please and reconcile; another  
 while to take away whatever may distaste  
 or give Offence; some Times we must  
 endure Contradictions and Gainsayings,  
 and have our Patience continually exer-  
 cised; at other Times we must be con-  
 tent to sacrifice our Interest to mitigate  
 and assuage the Impatience of others;  
 many Indignities must be overlooked,  
 many Injuries must be past by, many un-  
 kind Speeches must be buried in Oblivi-  
 on: All these, however difficult to Flesh  
 and Blood, must be performed by us, if  
 we would live peaceably; and cannot be  
 performed without a frequent Exercise  
 of the two great Duties of Charity and  
 Humility. But,

3. In order to the compassing of this  
 End, we must consider the Obligations  
 which engage us to it, both as we are  
 Men, and as we are Christians. What  
 Comfort or Satisfaction could we propose  
 to our selves, if we daily expected to  
 meet Wolves and Lions in our Way? If  
 the State of Nature (as it hath lately been  
 asserted) were nothing else but a State of  
 War; if we were continually exposed to  
 dangerous and mischievous Neighbours,  
 to fierce and savage Enemies, this would  
 not



not only disturb the Quiet of our Lives, Sermon. but destroy all the Duties and Offices of XXV. Humanity, frustrate the main Ends of mutual Society, subvert the fundamental Constitutions of Mankind, and alter in a Manner the whole Frame of Nature; by which Men were designed to cohabit peaceably, and to join together in sociable Communion; that so they might enjoy the Delights of Conversation, void of Fear, and free from Danger; and might promote one another's Advantage and Satisfaction, by being mutually helpful and beneficial. It is therefore reasonable, nay, absolutely necessary, if we desire to live quietly, comfortably and securely, which the bare Dictates of natural Reason will engage us to endeavour, as we are mere Men; to purchase as far as we are able the Good-will of others, to provoke no Man's Enmity or Ill-will, but to make it our Endeavour *to live peaceably with all Men.* But if we consider our selves as Christians, we shall then be furnished with stronger Arguments to induce us to the Practice of this Duty. Our Saviour telleth us (as I before informed you) that *by this we shall be known to be his Disciples*; without this therefore we may call our selves after his Name, we may brag that we *have eaten and drank*

Vol. II. *drank in his Presence, and that he hath taught in our very Streets; but this is the Distinction by which we must be known; this is the Demonstration that we are what we profess to be. In the Text which I just now quoted, our Saviour most positively declareth, that nothing else can constitute us his Disciples; and that they who teach or practise any other Doctrine, live directly in Opposition to his Commands, who frequently enjoineth us to love one another. We are therefore obliged by our Christian Charter, to return Good for Evil, to bless them that curse us; and not to do as Men do unto us, but as we would that Men should do unto us, even so to do unto them; for this is the Law and the Prophets. This is the Substance of all revealed Religion, and therefore we are not only commanded to live peaceably, but to let our Practice of it be universal, and that too under no less a Penalty than being shut out for ever from the Presence of the Lord; Follow Peace with all Men, saith the Author to the Hebrews, without which (and Holiness) no Man shall see God. And this bringeth me to the Consideration of*

II. My second General; namely, the Universality and Extent of this Duty, *Live peaceably with all Men.* There

THERE is no Religion in the World that professeth a Charity so boundless and unlimited, as ours doeth of the Church of *England*; it is not confined to Place or to Persons; but extendeth it self to the whole Race of Mankind, wheresoever dispersed over the Face of the Earth. Not only exacting the constant Practice of Peace and Amity towards our Friends and Benefactors, but even to our greatest Enemies and most cruel Persecutors: For this is right Christian Perfection, *To do good to them that hate us, and to pray for such as despitefully use us.* The believing Christians in *Rome*, to whom *St. Paul* addresseth this Epistle, were but a small and inconsiderable Party, in comparison of the Multitude of *Jews* and *Pagans*, with which that part of the World did then abound; and to have kindled up within them this Flame of Charity, and afterwards to have confined it among themselves; would have been *to light a Candle, and put it under a Bushel*, to cramp it within a Sphere too narrow for its Activity: Now because from those about them little Quiet could be expected, by such as made Profession of the Faith of Christ, unless they managed themselves with the exactest Prudence; he therefore willeth them to take care to  
avoid



Vol. II. avoid all Occasions of coming to a Rupture with those that were without; studiously to wave all exasperating Contentions; and by the Holiness and Peaceableness of their Conversation, at once to recommend their Doctrine and themselves; and therefore to live inoffensively and peaceably, even with those of a different Faith; *giving none Offence, as chiefly not to the Church of God, so neither to the Jew, nor to the Gentile: For, saith he, if ye love only them that love you, what Reward have you? And if ye salute your Brethren only, what do you more than others?* This was a Doctrine wholly repugnant to the Practice of the *Jews*, and to the Principles of their Religion; who thought themselves not only permitted, but commanded, to wish and to act all Evil to their Enemies; and such were all in their Esteem, that were not either *Jews* or *Profelytes*; and therefore they denied them the most common Offices of Civility, and would not so much as direct a Stranger in his Way, unless he were of their own Religion. But, blessed be God, *we have not so learned Christ*; being taught by himself, in his Sermon upon the Mount, to behave ourselves after a very different Manner: *Ye have learned* (saith he, reflecting upon the

the received Principles of the Jews) that *it hath been said, Thou shalt love thy Neighbour, and hate thy Enemy; but I say unto you, Love your Enemies.* He commandeth us heartily to desire, and earnestly to endeavour, their Happiness and Welfare, though they should eagerly pursue our Ruin and Destruction: And this is a noble Pitch of Good-will and Charity, which no other Religion could ever reach to, the most exalted Speculations could never attain to. To forgive an Injury was looked upon as a noble Action by some of the most illustrious Heathens; but *to overcome Evil with Good*, to heap Benefits where we had received Injuries, this is the peculiar Excellency of a Christian Charity; which shineth as universally as the Sun it self, *it cherisheth and warmeth the Just and the Unjust, and there is nothing hid from the Heat thereof.* The Righteous then must be as dear to us as our own Souls, we must *take sweet Counsel together with them, and must go with them into the House of God as Friends.* And the Wicked must be so far from being the Objects of our Hatred, that we must look upon them with Pity and Compassion; we must know how to distinguish between the Man and his Vices, and bemoan the one, while we detest

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Vol. II. test the other; and since we cannot but know, *that God hateth nothing which he hath made; we must be sure to love where God affecteth, and to copy out that divine Original.* The Prophet *Isaiab* assureth us, when he is describing the evangelical State, that under the Gospel Dispensation the *Wolf shall lie down with the Lamb, the Leopard shall dwell with the Kid, and the sucking Child shall play upon the Hole of the Asp;* that is, that Men of all Tempers and Conditions should be disposed by this Institution to live innocently, quietly, and lovingly together, so that *they should not hurt or destroy in all God's holy Mountain.* This therefore is a Duty absolutely incumbent upon all the several Members of the Christian Oeconomy; and whatever were the Customs of the *Jews* and *Pharisees* in denying the most ordinary Instances of Humanity, to such as were not of their Country or Religion; or whatever may be the Practice of some modern *Pharisees*, in shutting up their Friendship within such or such a Party; yet let not us confine our Love within so narrow a Compass, but let it be as unlimited and catholick as our Faith; let us use all Means to preserve Peace and Quietness: *If it be possible, as much as lieth in us, let*



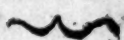
us live peaceably with all Men; and this  
leadeth me on to

Serm.  
XXV.

III. My third General, in which I  
am to consider the Limitations of this  
Duty, implying, in some Cases, a Dis-  
pensation from it, two Ways expressed;  
*If it be possible, and as much as lieth  
in you, live peaceably with all Men.*

THE former of these Expressions, *If  
it be possible*, as it informeth us, that the  
utmost of our Endeavours is to be em-  
ployed, and that no Difficulty, beneath  
the Degree of an Impossibility, can dis-  
charge us from it; so it intimateth as  
plainly to us, that sometimes our Labour  
may be lost, and our good Intentions  
quite defeated; that, by the Default and  
Perverseness of others, it may be impossi-  
ble for us to arrive at a peaceable Condi-  
tion of Life with all Men. We must not  
then be deterred from the Exercise of this  
Duty by any Difficulties that we may  
foresee; though the Parties to be recon-  
ciled may be froward and self-willed, or,  
in the Language of the Psalmist, *Enemies  
to Peace*; yet must we use the utmost of  
our Diligence, and not be disheartned  
by the Hardships we encounter; we  
must try, with Patience and unwearied  
Industry, to conquer the Untractableness  
of

Vol. II. of them we have to deal with; and where  
so precious a Jewel as Peace is to be  
purchased, we must be sure to spare nei-  
ther Cost nor Pains. But where there is  
no Agreement to be had with some Men  
(as it may happen in some Cases) without  
the Loss of a good Conscience, unless we  
will be irreligious, unfaithful, or unjust;  
if we can have no Peace with seditious  
Men, with Adulterers, Drunkards, or  
Blasphemers, unless we will run into the  
same Degree of Madness as themselves;  
where it is thus impossible for a good Chri-  
stian to continue such, and yet have  
Peace with Men; there we must rouse  
up our Christian Courage, and, consider-  
ing *that the Friendship of such Worldlings  
is Enmity with God*, we must prefer an  
inward Peace before that which is out-  
ward; the Honour of God, and the  
Quiet of our Souls, before the Content-  
ment of Men, or our temporal Tranquil-  
lity. This is that fatal Rock, upon which  
peaceable Designs are inevitably split,  
and which, by no prudent steering, can  
sometimes be avoided; namely, the un-  
reasonable Perverseness of some Mens  
Pretences; who will be Friends with  
us upon no other Terms, but upon Con-  
dition of our concurring with them in  
some dishonest and unwarrantable Practi-  
ces;

ces; either the omitting of some Duties, *Serm.*  
to which we are obliged by God's express *XXV.*  
Command; or else by embarking in such   
Actions, as are repugnant to the Dictates  
of Reason and Religion: Now in such a  
Case as this, though Peace with Men is  
a valuable Blessing, and one of the most  
precious Accommodations of Life; yet is  
it not comparable to the Favour of our  
God, or to the comfortable Testimony  
of a good Conscience. We must not  
therefore, to gratify our Fellow Crea-  
tures, break through the Obligations  
which we owe to our Creator; the least  
Glance of whose favourable Aspect is  
infinitely preferable to the most intimate  
Friendship of the mightiest upon Earth;  
and the least Spark of whose Indignation  
is more justly to be dreaded, than the  
combined Anger of the whole Universe.  
It is true, indeed, that to preserve Peace,  
and constantly to enjoy the good Will  
of all Men, we may, and ought, to quit  
very much of our private Interest or Sa-  
tisfaction; but we must not sacrifice to  
it that which is not our own, and which,  
in Value, incomparably transcendeth it;  
namely, the Maintenance of Truth, the  
Advancement of Justice, the Practice of  
Virtue, the Quiet of our Consciences,  
the Good of our Country, the Interest  
R of



Vol. II. of our Religion, and the Favour of our God.

And if, for the due Prosecution of these Ends, Men *will revile us, and hate us, and speak all manner of Evil against us*; if they will thus render it impossible for us *to live peaceably with them*; yet may we comfort our selves with this Assurance, that we shall have Peace hereafter in the World to come, though we cannot be so happy as to attain to it in this. But farther, when it is not possible to have Peace on both Sides, yet somewhat still may be done by us, that we be not the Occasion that the Knot of Union is broken; and this is couched in the second Expression of the Limitation of this Duty, *as much as lieth in you*; that is, nothing must be omitted upon our Side; and though we cannot compass a mutual Love, a reciprocal Return of the Friendship which we offer, yet must we continue to offer it still, and try, by an incessant Meekness and Inoffensiveness, to weary them, at last, into an amicable Compliance, and make even our Enemies to be at Peace with us. But if they are of a Humour, so morose and untractable, as to render all our Efforts vain and unsuccessful; *if they be such Sons of Belial, that (like Nabal) a Man cannot speak unto them*; if, by any Means, it is not possible

possible to engage them to live peaceably with us; yet still let us, as far as lieth in us, live peaceably with them; though towards us outwardly they will have no Peace, yet let us both inwardly and outwardly practise it towards them: Thus if we cannot shame them into their Duty, yet shall we at least discharge our own; though the compleat Perfection of the Work they will not permit, yet the Endeavour on our Side they cannot hinder. This Duty then, you see, of living peaceably, is required of us by our Lord and Master; and is pressed upon us, both strictly and frequently, by his own Exhortations, and those of his Apostles: It is not to be exercised narrowly or contractedly; but is to be as general as the Gospel which preacheth it, as the Religion which enjoineeth it, and the Sound of that is gone into all the Ends of the World; it must have no other Bounds, but those of Impossibility: And where it cannot be absolutely accomplished, it must, however, be candidly endeavoured and promoted, by all Means possible, as far as lieth in us. This is a just and necessary Preparative for the greatest Offices of our religious Worship; the holy Sacrament cannot worthily be received; but by such as are in Peace and Charity

Vol. II. with all Men; the Absolution cannot be pronounced to a dying Person, unless he be found to be in a peaceable and charitable Temper; it is the Salt and Seasoning of all other Graces, which, without this Charity, are nothing worth: In a Word, it was the last Legacy of our blessed Saviour, *Peace I leave with you, my Peace I give unto you*; and, by a due preserving of that inestimable Treasure, we shall qualify our selves for the Enjoyment hereafter of that Peace of God, which *passeth all Understanding*. I shall close up all with the Words of St. Paul, in his Epistle to the *Ephesians*, Chap. iv. *Let all Bitterness, and Wrath, and Anger, and Clamour, and evil speaking, be put away from you, with all Malice; and be ye kind one to another, tender-hearted, forgiving one another, even as God, for Christ's sake, hath forgiven you; and the God of Peace and Consolation grant you to be like-minded one towards another.*

*To him the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, three Persons, but one God of Peace, be ascribed all Honour, Power, Might, Majesty, and Dominion, henceforth and for evermore. Amen.*

SERMON





# SERMON XXVI.

Forgiving Injuries necessary  
to obtain Forgiveness.

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MATT. xviii. 35.

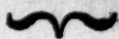
*So likewise shall my heavenly Father  
do also unto you, if ye from your  
Hearts forgive not every one his  
Brother their Trespases.*

**O**UR Saviour being desirous to Serm.  
incite his Followers to the XXVI.  
Exercise of the most Christian  
Virtue, Charity, in one of its  
chief Instances, the Forgiveness of Inju-  
ries, maketh use of that most admirable  
R 3 Parable,

Vol. II. Parable, of which my Text is the Conclusion, at once to illustrate it, and recommend it to our Practice: A Parable in which we have the Reasonableness of this Duty, with the Danger and the Folly of a contrary Proceeding set out in the clearest and most lively Colours; and therefore it will be both pertinent and useful to consider this Relation, which our Saviour here giveth us, with all that Leisure which the Importance of it requireth, under its several distinct Circumstances. He telleth us, in the 23d Verse of this Chapter, that the *Kingdom of Heaven*, or God's Method of dealing with us under the Gospel, *is like unto that of a certain King, who would take Account of his Servants*; and this Introduction was very necessary to usher in the Doctrine which he was about to establish; for the *Jews*, by Reason of the Hardness of their Hearts, and to answer the great Ends of God's Providence, for the Extirpation of those Nations, which his Soul abhorred; had been long indulged in a revengeful Disposition; and no more had been required of them under the Law, but *that they should love their Friends, and hate their Enemies*: But our Saviour's Coming was to settle a Religion, that should be made up of Gentleness and Love;

Love; that should plane the Rugged-  
ness of their Tempers, and sweeten the  
Bitterness of their Humours; and  
therefore he had Reason to preface  
his Discourse with an Assurance, that  
whatever had been allowed to them  
before, yet *the Kingdom of Heaven*, or  
the Gospel Dispensation, was of a diffe-  
rent Nature, *it was like unto a King, who*  
*would take Account of his Servants; and*  
*when he had begun to reckon, one was*  
*brought unto him, which owed him ten*  
*thousand Talents.* The more moderate Of-  
fenders are past over in Silence, to pre-  
sent to our View so extravagant a Debtor,  
as is sufficient to startle and amaze us;  
the Sum which he had embezzled being  
no less, according to the most favourable  
Computation, than almost two Millions  
of our Money: He thought, without  
question, by his Lord's long Forbear-  
ance, that he should never have been  
called to any Account; otherwise, it  
is probable, he had not dared to carry  
on his Injustice to so extraordinary a  
Height, as left him utterly incapable of  
making any Satisfaction; for so it fol-  
loweth immediately after, *But forasmuch*  
*as he had not to pay, his Lord commanded*  
*him to be sold, and his Wife, and Children,*  
*and all that he had, and Payment to be*

Serm.  
XXVI.



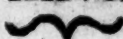


Vol. II. *made.* His ill-got Treasure had been profusely wasted, as Looseness is generally the Consequence of Injustice; he findeth himself unable to make any Compensation, and himself and Family, by the just Severity of his Prince, at once exposed to Beggary and Slavery: And now he is sensible of the Sadness of his Condition, and he, who, in all Likelihood, was haughty enough before, when he flourished in the Enjoyment of his unrighteous Gains, without ever thinking upon a Day of Reckoning, is cast down, and dejected, by so unexpected a Stroke, and hath no other Refuge but the Mercy of his Lord: *The Servant therefore fell down, and worshipped him, saying, Lord, have Patience with me, and I will pay thee all.* He threw himself at his Feet with a profound Humility, and, with all imaginable Expressions of Respect and Reverence, intreateth him to suspend the Execution of his Sentence, to give him Time to make Amends for his former Miscarriages; protesting, that he will use the utmost of his Endeavours to clear the vast Debt which he had so wickedly contracted. A small and trivial Compensation this was, for so great an Injustice as he had committed! but such as, with his merciful and indulgent Prince, prevailed even for

for more than he had the Confidence to *Serm.*  
 desire. *Then the Lord of that Servant XXVI.*  
*was moved with Compassion, and loosed*  
*him, and forgave him the Debt: His*  
 Bowels yearned over his humble Suppli-  
 cant; his Offence is swallowed up in the  
 Contemplation of his Penitence; and as  
 his Justice before sentenced the Offender,  
 so his Mercy now relieved the Petitioner,  
 who seeth even his Wishes out-done by  
 the Clemency of his Lord; since he en-  
 treated but for Patience, and he meeteth  
 with a Discharge; he begged only Time  
 for Payment, and his Debt is quite for-  
 given: And now he departeth full of Joy  
 and Satisfaction, applauding in his Heart  
 the Bounty of his Benefactor; and he  
 cannot sure but give such an inward  
 Testimony to the Excellency of that  
 Mercy, which he had just now expe-  
 rienced, as, one would think, should  
 work in him a stedfast Resolution to  
 transcribe, when he could, so beautiful  
 an Original. But we find his Procedure  
 to be extreamly different; no sooner  
 hath he tasted of the Favour of his Lord,  
 but he committeth an Action of the  
 greatest Unmercifulness, enhanced and  
 magnified by the most aggravating Cir-  
 cumstances: *But, saith the Text, the*  
*same Servant went out, and found one of*  
*his*

Vol. II. *his Fellow-Servants, which owed him an hundred Pence; and he laid Hands on him, and took him by the Throat, saying, Pay me that thou owest. Immediately, upon the receiving so inestimable a Blessing, when his Heart should have been filled with Tenderness and Love; when the Mercy of his Prince had been so largely poured upon him, that it ought to have overflowed to all that were about him; he exerciseth the greatest Cruelty towards his Equal, layeth violent Hands upon his Fellow-Servant, who owed him a mean and inconsiderable Trifle, no more than the six hundred thousandth Part of what his Lord so frankly had forgiven him; he seizeth him rudely by the Throat, and, with all the Insolence of undeserved Prosperity, exacteth the present Payment of what he owed him: The poor Man, thus unexpectedly surprized, betaketh himself to the good Nature of his Fellow-Servant; and, though neither the Quality of the Creditor, nor the Quantity of the Debt, bore any Proportion to the former Instance, yet he maketh his Humility and Submission equal: And his Fellow-Servant fell down at his Feet, and besought him, saying, Have Patience with me, and I will pay thee all. He had been, perhaps, a Witness, or had heard,*



heard, at least, an Account of the good Serm.  
 Success his Creditor had met with, when XXVI.  
 he made use of the same Method; and   
 he questioned not, but that which had  
 procured so great a Benefit, might now  
 prevail for so trivial a Favour; but he  
 found himself most unhappily disap-  
 pointed; his Fellow-Servant was deaf to  
 his passionate Petition: *And, saith the*  
*Text, he would not; but went and cast him*  
*into Prison, till he should pay the Debt.*  
 Had he done thus before his Lord had for-  
 given him his Debt, though the Usage had  
 then been too harsh and severe; yet might  
 it have been in some Measure excusable,  
 because we might have then imagined  
 that he did it to enable him to make up  
 his Account with his Lord; but when  
 he was freed from all such Engagements,  
 was just got clear of so pressing an In-  
 cumbrance; to be insensible of those  
 Miseries in another, which he had lately  
 felt so grievous to himself; and to refuse  
 to exercise that Mercy, which he had so  
 largely and so lately experienced; was a  
 Piece of Inhumanity so scandalous and  
 detestable, as would engage all Men in  
 Enmity against him. Thus we find it  
 did, in the Account that followeth; *So*  
*when his Fellow-Servants saw what was*  
*done, they were very sorry, and came and*  
*told*

Vol. II. *told unto their Lord all that was done.*

Those who were no otherwise concerned in this Action, than by the Compassion which they had for the Sufferings of their Companion, could not be unaffected with so barbarous a Procedure; they were grieved for their Fellow, and incensed against his Persecutor; and acquainted their common Lord how ill his Goodness had been placed, upon so ungrateful and unmerciful a Wretch: And their Complaints were hearkened to, and the Lord was incensed, and retracteth that Pardon which he was unworthy to partake of: *Then his Lord, after that he had called him, said unto him, O thou wicked Servant, I forgave thee all that Debt, because thou desiredst me; shouldest not thou also have had Compassion on thy Fellow-Servant, even as I had Pity on thee? And his Lord was wroth, and delivered him to the Tormentors, till he should pay all that was due unto him.* It is likely that the Servant thought himself secure, when his Lord had forgiven him the ten thousand Talents; and little did he imagine that this cancelled Debt should ever rise up again in Judgment against him; but his Lord, who was freshly injured in the Person of his Servant, and whose Forgiveness of him contained a tacit Condition,

tion, that he should exemplify it in his Sermon Dealings with others; first sendeth for XXVI. him, and convinceth him of the Heinousness of his Offence, upbraiding him with the Greatness of the Mercy he had received; and with his Baseness, in not following so amiable a Pattern; and then recalling the Favour which he had formerly imparted, and which his Servant had justly forfeited, by his late Unmercifulness; he consigneth him over to endless Sufferings, since he could never be able to make sufficient Satisfaction, and he yet *must be tormented till he should pay all that was due.* This is that most elegant and patheticall Allusion, by which our Saviour endeavoureth to illustrate the fatal Consequences of that unchristian Practice, *of not forgiving, as we are forgiven:* And the brief Explication of it is this: That however great our Offences may be, against Almighty God, who is our King and Governor, yet, upon our hearty Sorrow for them, and humble addressing of our selves to him for Mercy, he will not fail to pardon and forgive them; but whatever Pardon he thus extendeth to us, it is upon Condition that we forgive others; since, if we prove unmerciful to them, God will repent him of his Favour to us, and reckon with us severely for



Vol. II. for all our Transgressions: Thus our Saviour assureth us, in the Words of my Text; where he giveth us to understand that the foregoing Parable is no idle Account of foreign Transactions; to which we may listen, or turn a deaf Ear, without any considerable Consequences to our selves; but that we are intimately concerned in the whole Relation, that the Moral of it pointeth exactly to our selves; *So likewise, saith he, shall my heavenly Father do also unto you, if ye, from your Hearts, forgive not every one his Brother their Trespases:* According as the King dealt with his Servant, so will God deal with us; such and so great is the Disproportion between those Offences which we commit against him, and those which our Brother can commit against us; and therefore equal is our Transgression, and answerable will be our Punishment, if we do not extend that Forgiveness to others, which we have experienced from God our selves.

It will be necessary to insist upon three Things, for the clearer Explication of this Point of Doctrine:

- I. To enquire what is here meant by *forgiving of Trespases*, and after what manner this Duty must be discharged.
- II. To

II. To consider the Force of that In- Sermon.  
ducement, which we have to the XXVI.  
Performance of this Duty, upon ac-  
count of those many Trespases for  
which God vouchsafeth to forgive  
us; and,

III. To examine the dangerous Con-  
sequences, which inevitably attend  
our omission of this Duty; namely,  
that *God will not forgive us our Trespases, unless we forgive them that trespass against us.*

I. THEN, It will be necessary to en-  
quire what is here meant by *forgiving of Trespases*, and after what manner this Duty must be discharged. And here we are informed that we must *forgive from our Hearts*; and therefore it is not enough that we only forbear to take Revenge for the Injuries that are done us; it is not sufficient that we are contented to abstain from rendering Evil for Evil, and Stripe for Stripe, though this is a good Step to the Performance of this Duty; for this was a Pitch of Charity and true Bravery, to which the Precepts of Morality were capable to conduct some of the most eminent and considering Philosophers; but Christianity soareth far above this Level; it expecteth that we should

Vol. II. should not only forgive but forget them, at least to all the Intents of Anger or Revenge; that we should never upbraid, or entertain any inward Enmity, against those who have done us the most sensible Displeasures; we must not so much as wish any Mischief may befall them, although it should come from another Hand; much less must we sollicite God against them, or pray to him to take Vengeance in our behalf. The Forgiveness which Christianity requireth at our Hands, is such a one as quite blotteth out the Offence, and leaveth no Impression of it upon our Spirits, no Footsteps of it within our Remembrance; it must be such a one (to attain to its Perfection) as reinstateth the offending Person in the same Condition which he was in before; that qualifyeth him for the same Expressions of our Love and Tenderness; that leaveth nothing behind which may stop the Current, or intercept the Passage of our Kindness to him. For otherwise if we preserve the Remembrance of it in our Minds, it will be apt to make us suspicious of his Actions; it will help to aggravate every new Offence, and by that Means will keep the Breach still open, which it is the part of Christian Charity to heal and close up. It was a malicious part of *Darius,*



rius, that when the *Athenians* had plundered *Sardis*, he resolving to remember that evil turn, till he had an opportunity of doing them a Mischief; commanded one of his Servants, who waited on him at Supper, to call upon him thrice every Night, *Sir, Remember the Athenians.* The Devil is very apt to do this Office for any Man, and he that keepeth in his Mind the Remembrance of an Injury, needeth no other Tempter but his own Memory. The noble *Spartan, Lycurgus*, was of another Spirit, and such as might provoke even Christians to Emulation; in a Tumult made against him by some Citizens he lost an Eye, which Fact the wiser part of the People detesting, gave the Villain that did it into their Prince's Power; and he used it honourably, he kept him in his House a Year, he taught him Virtue, and brought him forth to the People a worthy Citizen. This was truly returning Good for Evil, and a just Imitation of the Forgiveness of God; who so entirely pardoneth our Offences, that he neither condemneth by Revenging, nor confoundeth by Upbraiding, nor loveth less by Imputing; but heapeth upon us fresh Instances of his Tenderness, notwithstanding our great and manifold Provocations. This then is the

Serm. XXVI.

Vol. II. Nature of that excellent Duty, in which  
 our Saviour would have us conversant,  
 and we ought to exercise it with these  
 following Qualifications:

1. We must extend it to every Person; we may, perhaps, be willing to forgive some whose Company and Conversation we are particularly fond of; or from whom we may hope to receive some Advantage, which may more than counter-vail the present Injury; but this is rather Self-love than Charity; rather a Pleasing of our selves than a Forgiving of our Brother; that must be Impartial and Universal; our Saviour telleth us, *that we must forgive every one his Brother their Trespases*; this is a Tie of so great a Latitude, that it taketh in the whole Race of Mankind; since God who is the common Father of us all, hath made us all Brethren by Creation.

2. As this Pardon must be extended to every Person, so must it be afforded to every Offence: it is true indeed, the Son of Sirach telleth us, *that for some things there will be no returning again, a Blow, saith he, or an evil Word may be pardoned; but for Upbraiding and Pride, and disclosing Secrets, and a treacherous Wound, every Friend will depart, and will not return again*; but he only telleth us  
 here

here how Things will be, and not how Serm. they ought; how they are usually managed in civil Friendships, not how they should be in a religious Commerce; in this not only these but greater ought to be pardoned; since our Saviour's Direction is large and indefinite, without any Restriction or Limitation, that *we should forgive our Brethren their Trespases*; neither the Greatness nor the Number of them should obstruct our Forgiveness, since it is the Property of Charity *to bear all Things*: To this purpose our Saviour answereth St. Peter in the Verses immediately before this Parable, and which gave our Saviour the Occasion of delivering it; *How often*, saith this great Apostle, being not yet fully weaned from the revengeful Humour which was indulged under the legal Dispensation, *must I forgive my Brother? till seven times?* this he thought a high Pitch of Charity, and that which could not reasonably be exceeded; but our Saviour forbiddeth its being confined within such narrow Limits; *I say not unto thee, till seven times, but until seventy times seven*; implying thereby, that we must be ready to forgive him oftner than he can need it; it being almost impossible to suppose, that any one should injure us so often, as we are here required to



Vol. II. pardon his Injuriousness ; and thus much shall suffice, as to the Nature of this Duty, together with the Manner after which it should be practised : it must be such a Forgiveness as implieth a Forgetfulness, and restoreth the Offender to his former degree of Favour ; it must reach to every Transgressor, and it must cover every Offence ; and must exactly imitate the divine Forgiveness, which ought to be as well the Example of our Performance, as it is the strongest Argument to oblige us to its Practice ; and this leadeth me,

II. To consider the Force of that Inducement, which we have to the Exercise of this Duty, upon account of those many Trespasses, for which God hath vouchsafed to forgive us.

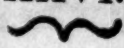
If God, who is a Being of infinite Excellency, and every Offence against whom must consequently contract a Guilt that is infinite, doeth yet graciously pass by our repeated Transgressions, how ought the Majesty of so great an Example to work powerfully upon our Souls ; and dispose us to the ready Forgiveness of such Trifles, as can be done in prejudice of us worthless Creatures ? If God who is so highly elevated above us, being the Lord of us and the whole Earth, remitteth to

us the vast Debt of ten Thousand Talents ; shall not we who stand but upon a Level with our Brethren, forgive them the trivial Sum of one Hundred Pence ? The Disproportion between us is inconceivably greater, the Obligations we lie under are infinitely stronger ; and yet when we break through all these Ties and Engagements, and rush into open Disobedience and Hostility ; he deferreth to take the heavy Forfeiture, he patiently waiteth for our return to Duty, and layeth hold of the first Advances which we make ; nay, exhibiteth the Offers of Reconciliation to us ; and accepteth of the meanest and most imperfect Satisfaction, by which we may be intitled to his Pardon and Forgiveness : and shall we think it hard, who have received so much Mercy, to impart a small Scantling of it to our transgressing Brother ; all whose Offences against us, if compared to those which we commit against our God, are but as the Drops of the Bucket to the Waters of the Ocean ? But as this Consideration doeth forcibly engage us to the Exercise of this great Duty, so doeth it oblige us also to be constantly employed in the Practice of it ; God is continually imparting his Forgiveness, we have the Instances of it repeated every Moment ;

Serm.  
XXVI.

Vol. II. as our Transgressions are provoking him daily, so is his Mercy every day exemplified ; and therefore we shall be so much the more inexcusable, if when the Expressions of his Goodness are so very frequent, and refresh our Memory with such continual Evidences of it, we shall yet omit the Duty to which they lead us, and which they principally design to cultivate in our Hearts : we see the wicked Servant treated of in the Parable, though just having received his Pardon from his Lord, immediately refusing one to his Fellow-servant ; by which his Unmercifulness was very highly aggravated ; and shall we rather choose to follow that detestable Example, than the Pattern of his Lord, who teacheth us Forgiveness ? If we can find any portion of our Time, wherein we are not indebted to the Forgiveness of our God, let us dedicate that to Malice towards our Brethren ; but since it is by his Long-suffering that we live every Moment of our Life, since there is not the smallest Particle of our Time, but what we owe to the Patience and Tenderneſs of our God ; let us not rush out, when we are receiving his Mercies, and seize our Fellow-servant by the Throat. The beloved Apostle thinketh he needeth make use of no other Argument



gument to engage us to exercise Charity *Serm.*  
towards our Brethren, but the Mention *XXVI.*  
and Remembrance of God's Love to us ;   
*Beloved* (saith he) *if God so loved us, we*  
*ought also to love one another* : Certainly  
the Consideration of that inexpressible  
Goodness, which God is perpetually ex-  
ercising towards us, cannot fail to work,  
upon any generous Spirit, such a suita-  
ble return of Gratitude towards him, as  
will engage us to resemble our selves to  
the Object of our Love ; and in this Du-  
ty of Forgiveness as well as in others,  
to endeavour *to be perfect even as he is*  
*perfect*. Lions indeed and Tygers do,  
with a strange Curiosity, eye and ob-  
serve him that struck them, and they  
fight with him above the rest of their  
Hunters : to strike again is the Return  
of Beasts ; but to pardon him that in-  
jured us is the bravest Amends, and the  
noblest Means of doing Right unto our  
selves ; whilst by such Ways as are truly  
manly, and by the Methods of God him-  
self, we conquer our Enemy into a Friend.  
But if there should be any of so base a  
Nature, as not to be fired by so noble an  
Example, or wrought upon by the Rea-  
sonableness of the Duty enjoined ; yet let  
those be terrified by the Sense of those  
Dangers to which a contrary Proceeding

Vol. II. will infallibly expose them; and this lead-  
 ~~~~~ eth me,

III. To examine the fatal Consequences, which inevitably attend our Omission of this Duty; namely, that *God will not forgive us our Trespases, unless we forgive them that trespass against us*: If in the Exercise of this great Duty we will not follow the Example of God, he most infallibly will follow ours: the Psalmist assureth us to this Purpose, that *with the froward he will shew himself froward*: for though in us it is Cruelty, in God it is but Justice; since all the Forgiveness which he imparteth to us, is upon Condition that we should pardon our Brother: we are not allowed so much as to pray for it, upon any other Consideration; *When you stand praying, saith our Saviour, if you have any thing against any Man, forgive him, that your Father which is in Heaven may forgive you your Trespases*; nay, he hath taught us to pray after this same manner, in that divine Form which he hath put into our Mouths, *forgive us our Trespases, as we forgive them that trespass against us*; and shall we dare to expect Pardon at the Hands of God, by no other measure, and upon no other account but this; without exercising that Charity to our Brethren,
 which

which alone can qualify us for his For- Serm.
giveness? Let us, I beseech you, seriously XXVI.
consider, how different our Actions in 
this Case are usually from our Expres-
sions. Do we desire that God should for-
give us, no otherwise than as we for-
give? Do we not take pet at every lit-
tle Failure, and grow warm and peevish
at every trifling Mistake? Are we not in-
flamed upon the slightest Injury, and
sometimes angry at unavoidable Acci-
dents? Would we have God to deal thus
with us, and forgive in no other man-
ner than we do? that is, would we have
him turn his Anger into all Figures, and
wound us with it in every Part? Or would
we be contented, that God should only
over-look our smaller Infirmities, a rash
Word, or an Hour spent idly? We think
we have done some very great matter, if
we thus far can bear with our Brother,
without flying into a Passion, and medi-
tating Revenge: but if he revile us to
our Face, if he blacken our Reputation,
if he rob us, if he smite us, what will
we do then? Will we pass over these
Things calmly and contentedly? Much
greater Offences than these we commit
against our God, and yet we hope, and
we pray for his Forgiveness of them:
But how unreasonable our Expectations
of

Vol. II. of Pardon will be, if we foster Malice against our transgressing Brother, the Son of Sirach telleth us largely in Chap. xxviii. *He that revengeth (saith he) shall find Vengeance of the Lord, and he will surely keep his Sins in remembrance: Forgive thy Neighbour the Hurt he hath done unto thee, so shall thy Sins also be forgiven when thou prayest. One Man keepeth Anger against another, and doth he seek healing of the Lord? He sheweth no Mercy to a Man that is like himself, and doth he ask Forgiveness for his own Sin? If he that is but Flesh nourish Hatred, who will intreat for Pardon of his Sins? The Duty is very visible, and the Reasons are very cogent, and the Commandment most expresse, and the Commination extreamly dreadful, and the Promise most excellent and inviting. Pardon here is promised to the Merciful, Destruction threatned to the Uncharitable; and a Judgment denounced against them so little regretted, that none will intercede for the Mitigation of it: Even our tender and compassionate Mediator will not prostitute his prevailing Intercession for those pityless Wretches which are so unlike to him: his Livery is that of Love, by this are Men known to be his Disciples; Malice and Revenge are the Badges of the Devil, they are worn by*

by none but his Followers; and there-
fore when such shall implore Mercy at
our Redeemer's Hands, he will shut his
Ears against all their Petitions, he will
answer them with a *Verily I know you not*;
and will deal with them, as he did with
the Tribute Money, consign them over
to his Possession, whose Image and Su-
perscription they so visibly carry. Let us
then take care, that we flatter not our
selves, as the wicked Servant did in the
Parable; and imagine that all our Of-
fences are forgiven, because we feel our
Consciences in a quieter Posture, and
fancy that we are sealed unto the Day of
Pardon; if we find that we cherish any
Ill-will against our Brethren, we may be
certain, that this is but a deceitful Secu-
rity; that our Hearts are deluding us
with false Appearances, and crying, *Peace,*
Peace, to us, where no Peace is. The
ten Thousand Talents which we think
were remitted, will be exacted of us still
with the utmost Severity; unless we have
forgiven the Hundred Pence due to us,
and shewn our selves merciful to our Bro-
ther, as our Father which is in Heaven
hath been merciful to us. Let us then
consider how dreadful the Alteration will
be, when we thought our selves secure
of the Pardon of our Sins, that the vast
Debt

Vol. II. Debt which we owed, and were unable to pay, by the Mercy of our King was quite crost out; to see all our Hopes frustrated by our own Uncharitableness, and our selves delivered over to the Tormentors Hands, till we can satisfy for a Debt which we must always be paying, and which it is not possible for us ever to clear! yet thus we are assured it shall be with us, unless we extend that Compassion to others, which our gracious God so frequently exerciseth towards us; *So likewise shall our heavenly Father do unto us, if we from our Hearts forgive not every one his Brother their Trespases.*

THUS after a full and distinct Comment, upon the several Circumstances of that excellent Parable, under which our Saviour couched his Exhortation to this Duty; I have briefly considered the Doctrine it self, which he explained and recommended under that elegant Allusion; by enquiring first into the Nature of the Duty which we are to practise, together with the Manner in which we should perform it: by considering, Secondly, the Force of that Inducement which is here laid down to engage us to it, upon account of that Forgiveness which God vouchsafeth to us; and by examining, Thirdly, the fatal Consequences, which

which flow from our Omission of this Sermon Duty; namely, the excluding us from XXVI. that Pardon at God's Hands, which we will not impart to our offending Brother.

AND now give me leave, before I conclude, upon the present Occasion, to add a Word or two, to shew how indispensibly requisite this Duty is to qualify us for the Reception of that blessed Sacrament, of which many of us, I hope, design to be devout Partakers. When we approach with Reverence to that Holy Table, we come with a Desire to be united to our God; and therefore should put on the Resemblance of him, who delighteth in pardoning much more than in punishing: then we come to beg for the greatest of all Blessings, to intreat for the entire Forgiveness of our Sins; and therefore it is necessary that we should be willingly disposed to dispense such Favours as we are able to give, and to forgive such Failings as have been committed against our selves: then we come to celebrate the Communion of Saints; and therefore we ought to bring such friendly Intentions, as may constitute us fit Members of that happy Society. To draw near to that Feast of Love, with Designs of Malice, is not only to come without the Wedding Garment, but to appear there in a Dress the

Vol. II. the most loathsome and detestable; to come to the Participation of the Body of Christ, with revengeful Inclinations towards any of his Members, is to *crucify him again* in our uncharitable Resolutions, and *put him afresh to open shame*: to partake of his Blood, and at the same time, to thirst for that of his adopted Brethren, is to make that Blood of Sprinkling speak worse things against us, than that of *Abel* did against his Murderers: Reconciliation with our Brethren is expressly enjoined by our Church, in her Rubrick before the Communion Office, as a part of Preparation that cannot be dispensed with; and therefore we cannot approach to the Altar under any probable Expectation of departing thence with well-grounded Assurances of the Favour of God, unless we come thither with charitable Affections, and Hearts inflamed with Gratitude and Love. Since then Forgiveness of Trespases is unavoidably necessary to fit us for a due and commendable Reception of the Body and Blood of our blessed Saviour: since none who beareth Malice or Hatred in his Heart, can be a welcome Guest at that sacred Table, where the whole Entertainment is Love and Charity: I have therefore thought fit to recommend to your Practice, that
great

great Duty of Forgiveness of Injuries, *Serm.*
 which is a most necessary and indispens- *XXVI.*
 ble Qualification for our worthy Parti-
 cipation of those Holy Elements, which
 command our Attendance at the ap-
 proaching Festival. Our Saviour, in order
 to this great End, maketh use of that most
 admirable Parable of which my Text is
 the Conclusion; at once to illustrate the
 Excellency of this Duty, and engage us
 to the constant Performance of it; a Pa-
 rable in which we have the Reasonable-
 ness of this Practice, with the Danger
 and the Folly of a contrary Proceeding,
 set out in the most clear and lively Co-
 lours. Let us who intend to keep the
 Passover, not keep it with the old Leaven,
 neither with the Leaven of Malice; *but*
let all Bitterness, and Wrath, and Anger,
and Clamour, and Evil-speaking be put
away from us, with all Malice; and let us
be kind one to another, tender-hearted,
forgiving one another, even as God for
Christ's sake hath forgiven us. Which
 that we may all do, and be qualified by
 so doing, for the intire Forgiveness of all
 our Sins, by that sufficient Sacrifice which
 was offered upon the Cross, and for the
 Remembrance of which the Holy Sa-
 crament was ordained, God of his in-
 finite Mercy grant, through the Merits
 and

Vol. II. and Mediation of our merciful Redeem-
er ;

To whom, with the Father, and the Holy Spirit, be ascribed all Honour, Power, Might, Majesty, and Dominion, henceforth and for evermore. Amen.



SERMON



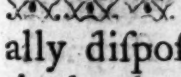
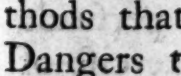
SERMON XXVII.

Piety the best Security against
Calamities.

PROV. xii. former Part of the 21st
Verse.

*There shall no Evil happen to the
Just.*


 affordeth just Matter of Serm.

 Wonder and Astonishment, XXVII.

 that the great Principle of

 Self-preservation, which usu-
 ally disposeth Men to embrace all Me-
 thods that may free them from those
 Dangers to which they are obnoxious;
 should only want Force in that consider-
 able Instance, wherein it is most capable
 of being eminently beneficial: That this
 general Maxim implanted in our Nature,
 which putteth us upon our Guard against
 T the

Vol. II. the slightest Inconvenience, and maketh
us arm for the Repelling of a single Evil;
should fail to engage us in the Pursuit of
that which would powerfully protect us
in the most difficult Circumstances, and
universally secure us against all manner of
Hazards. Piety alone is that Armour of
Proof, which rendereth those that wear
it safe and invulnerable; and Innocence
is acknowledged by the Testimony of a
Heathen, to be a Defence equivalent to a
Wall of Brass: And yet, as if the Chri-
stian were the only Infidel, how few of
us are so thoroughly convinced of this
great Truth, as to pursue it with an
Eagerness proportionable to its Value?
Our Aversion is sufficient against such
Things as are uneasy; and we are all but
too sensible of whatever incommodeth
us; and yet we are unwilling to make use
of that Method which the Wise Man assu-
reth us will defend us from all Evils, by
being the Practitioners of that which is
just. It shall therefore be my Business
in my following Discourse, to persuade
you to be conversant in the Exercise of
Piety, upon account of the Advantage
which is specified in my Text, namely,
That it will secure you from all Manner
of Dangers. *There shall no Evil happen
to the Just.*

IN pursuance of this great End, I shall endeavour to make out the Truth of this single Proposition; *That a religious Life and Conversation is the best Security against all manner of Evils.* Serm.
XXVII.

To make out the Truth of this important Proposition, it will be necessary for us to consider, That all Manner of Evils to which we can be liable, may be reduced under these three Heads. They are either,

- I. SUCH as are inflicted immediately by God, and are the Result of his divine Will and Pleasure; or,
- II. SUCH as are occasioned by our selves, and are the Effects either of Sin, or Carelessness; or,
- III. SUCH as are brought upon us by the Malice of Men or Devils, and are only tolerated by God's Conivance and Permission.

UNDER these may be comprehended all Kinds of Evils which can any way affect us in our most various Circumstances; and if we find upon a strict Enquiry, that the Exercises of Piety will ward off all these, and make them incapable of doing us any Prejudice; we may then conclude necessarily and unavoidably;

Vol. II. that a religious Life and Conversation is
 ~~~~~ the best Security against all manner of  
 Harms. *That no Evil shall happen to the  
 Just.*

I. THEN I say, a religious Life and Conversation will secure us against all such Evils, as are inflicted upon Men immediately by God, and are the Result of his divine Will and Pleasure.

AND here it will be necessary for us to distinguish between such Afflictions as God vouchsafeth in Mercy; and those with which he visiteth in Judgment: The best of Men are not exempted from the former, nay, they seem to be the peculiar Portion of them alone: Sometimes he seeth something that is amiss in them, and gently correcteth them in order to their Amendment: The most Pious are not always so intent upon their Duty, but that they often stand in need of a sharp Remembrancer; and therefore God awakeneth them with Punishments in love; that by such Admonitions they may continue in his Favour, and not become the Objects of his Anger and Displeasure: And these are but the tender Chastisements of an indulgent Father; to warn his Children of their Errors and Infirmities, that they may be the better  
 qua-

qualified for his Favour and Affection. Sermon.  
 At other Times it pleaseth God to afflict XXVII.  
 devout Souls, for the Trial of their Faith,  
 for the Exercise of their Patience, to ac-  
 custom them to Self-denials, to wean  
 them from the World, to teach them a  
 Christian Resignation, and to make them  
 cast themselves entirely upon him: But  
 then these are only designed to fit them  
 for the greater Recompence of Reward;  
 all *these light Afflictions which are but for*  
*a Moment, are intended to work for them*  
*a far more exceeding and eternal Weight of*  
*Glory*: They are but like the more diffi-  
 cult Tasks of a discreet and loving Tutor;  
 which recommend the Pupils, by the Per-  
 formance of them, to a higher Applause,  
 and to more excellent Advantages: And  
 therefore these are so far from doing them  
 Harm, or consequently from deserving  
 the Name of Evils; that they ought to  
 be looked upon as valuable Blessings;  
 and it is in relation to such Trials as  
 these, that the Apostle exhorteth us to  
*count it all Joy when we fall into divers*  
*Temptations*. Those Inflictions therefore  
 of Almighty God, which may justly be  
 intitled to the Name of Evils, are such  
 only as he visiteth with in Judgment; and  
 from such nothing can more effectually  
 secure us, than a religious Life and Con-  
 T 3 versation.



Vol. II. versation. God cometh not then to correct, but to confound; he cometh not then to lance the infected Members, and afterwards to bind them up in order to their Cure; but utterly to cut off such as are ulcerated, and to whom his softer Applications have been ineffectual. Then must the loose Libertine account severely, for his open Lewdness and Profaneness; then must the close Hypocrite be strictly reckoned with, for his provoking Deceitfulness and Dissimulation; the one shall not be able to daunt his Judge with his hardened Forehead and barefaced Impiety; nor the other be capable to impose upon him by his fair Appearances and demure Pretences; But when both of them shall be covered with Confusion of Face, and transfixed with the Bolts of the divine Vengeance; the pious Christian that hath discharged his Duty, and always exercised himself in this, to *keep a Conscience void of Offence towards God and towards Man*; shall with a modest Confidence erect his Countenance, and look without Fear upon their Destruction. *For shall not the Judge of all the Earth do right? Will he destroy the Righteous with the Wicked? Far be it from him to do after that manner; that the Righteous should be as the Wicked, that be far*

I from

from him: His Anger indeed may sometimes burn so fiercely, as not to be wrought upon by their Intercession, to spare those guilty Wretches which his Justice hath sentenced; but it can never be transported to such an Excess, as to involve the Just in their Condemnation: The Prophet Ezekiel informeth us to this Purpose, *that when a Land sinneth against God, by trespassing grievously, then will he stretch out his Hand upon it; and though these three, Noah, Daniel, and Job were in it; yet should they deliver neither Son, nor Daughter, they should only deliver their own Souls by their Righteousness*: Where, as we are assured on the one Side, that their Mediation should be unsuccessful, if employed in the Behalf of such incorrigible Offenders; so on the other Side it is as positively declared, that they should by their Righteousness deliver their own Souls. For when God visiteth for Iniquity, shall Piety suffer? From a Judge so just what hath Innocence to fear? *As with the Froward God will learn Frowardness, so with the Upright will he shew himself Upright*: And those who have an inward Testimony, that they have not abused the Refreshings of his Mercy, need never apprehend the Inflictions of his Justice: God is Goodness in its most abso-

Vol. II. lute Perfection; he is the Fountain and  
 ~~~~~ Original, from which all Things stream  
 that deserve that Character; it is his proper
 Epithet, *The Lord is good*: We cannot then
 imagine, that he should set himself against
 those, who endeavour to resemble him in this
 essential Excellency; we cannot suppose, *That
 any Evil from him should happen to the Just*. And
 therefore against all such Evils as proceed
 immediately from God, and are the Result
 of his divine Will and Pleasure; a religious
 Life and Conversation is the best Security
 and Defence. But,

II. THERE are another Sort of Evils
 which are occasioned by our selves, and
 are the Effects either of our Sin, or of
 our Carelessness; and against these also the
 best Security is a religious Life and Con-
 versation.

IF we will look abroad, and take a
 careful View of the decayed Senses, and
 crazy Limbs of some People, and the
 uncomfortable Circumstances and Mis-
 fortunes of others; we shall find the Ori-
 ginal of these Unhappineffes to be, for the
 most part, their own Folly and Wicked-
 ness. Are they worn away with conti-
 nual Watchings, and reduced to the Ex-
 tremities of Languishing and Weakness?

We

We must lay the Fault of it at the Door *Serm.*
of Covetousness, or Ambition: Are they *XXVII.*
come to Feebleness of Joints, and Rot-
tenness of Bones? We must impute the
Cause of it to Loosness and Sensuality: Is
the Blood on Fire, and the Stomach qual-
mish? We need look no farther for the
Occasion, than Drunkenness and Intem-
perance: Thus all those Evils which af-
flict human Nature, and which take their
Original from our selves, are the unhap-
py Consequences of our own Mismanage-
ment, and the Stings which our Offen-
ces still carry in their Tails. And what
then can better arm us against the Poi-
son of those Miseries which Sin occasi-
oneth, than the happy Antidote of a pious
Conversation? Remove the Cause, and
the Effect ceaseth; take away that Impiety
which is the Parent of these Mischiefs,
and the viperous Brood will perish of
themselves. For how shall he be subject
to those Sickneses and Uneasinesses,
which are the dismal Product of Lust or
Intemperance; who subdueth his Body,
and keepeth it under, instead of pamper-
ing it to that Excess which might incline
it to either? How can he be liable to
those Rackings and Vexations which prey
upon the Covetous and the Ambitious;
to whom the perishing Riches, and emp-
ty.

Vol. II. *ty* Honours of this World are equally tasteless and insipid? It is impossible that any of those Evils, which are only the Effects of Wickedness or Folly, should ever be the Portion of that Man, who is guarded by Religion against both those Imperfections. We have a most clear and remarkable Instance of those Miseries which Sin bringeth upon its wretched Martyrs, in that noted Parable of the Prodigal Son, whose Disobedience to his Father, and whose riotous Way of Living, reduced him to the most miserable and most despicable Condition: And we meet, in the same Parable, with the proper Remedy for these Inconveniencies; where we are informed for our Instruction and Admonition, that his Repentance and returning to his Duty, was that which reinstated him in the Favour of his Father, and in the Advantages he had forfeited by his former Licentiousness: Can any Thing more clearly depaint those Miseries, which are usually brought upon us by a wicked Conversation? Or express those Benefits in more lively Colours, which are certainly attained to by a contrary Proceeding? If therefore those Evils which are occasioned by our selves, must always take their Rise from our Sin, or from our Carelessness; and if it be the
Work

Work and Office of true Piety, to make us at the same Time both holy and considerate, it will evidently appear, that a religious Life and Conversation is the best Security against this second Sort of Evils; *That none of them shall happen to the Just.* But, Serm. XXVII.

III. WE have yet another Sort of Evils to enquire into; and these are such as are brought upon us, either by the Malice of Men or Devils; and are only tolerated by God's Connivance and Permission; and against these also the best Defence is a religious Life and Conversation.

I SHALL not deny, but that ill Men and Devils will be more provoked to do what Mischief they can, to such whose exemplary Goodness, and unblameable Way of living, upbraideth the former for their contrary Management, and putteth the others out of hope of ever making them their Prey: And therefore I shall not attempt to persuade you, that their Innocence shall hinder them from being exposed to the most violent Rage of Men and Devils: But that in which I shall prove their Security to consist, against the united Attempts both of the one and the other, is that Almighty Protection to which they are intitled, and against which all

Vol. II. all their Endeavours will be vain and ineffectual; God will still be their Refuge and Defence, *a very present Help in Trouble.* The most powerful of the Sons of Men can proceed no farther, than God's Allowance will permit him. It was our Saviour's Assertion to the *Roman Governor*, *Thou couldst have no Power at all against me, unless it were given thee from above.* And the Devil, furious and malicious as he is, *who goeth about like a roaring Lion, seeking whom he may devour*, yet always draggeth his Chain after him, by which he may be drawn back to his infernal Dungeon; and therefore they are able to act no more, than God for his own wise Purposes will allow them: Unless then he hath some such favourable Ends, as I formerly instanced in his own Inflictions, and maketh their Rage but the Instrument of his gracious Corrections, he will certainly keep his own out of their ravenous Jaws, and not suffer them to become a Prey unto their Teeth. For those who live piously and inoffensively, have all the divine Attributes for their Security: The Goodness of God will happily dispose him to extend his Favour to all such as are fitly qualified to be the Objects of it; his Justice will engage him to take Care of their Concerns,

who

who have performed the Covenant which they entered into with him; his Truth will oblige him to make good those gracious Promises, which he hath made to be the Guardian of all such as fear him; his Holiness will incline him to be favourable to those, who endeavour by Piety to resemble themselves to him, humbly aiming *to be pure even as he is pure*; his Wisdom, by which he discerneth the Integrity of their Hearts, will furnish him with Means for defeating all the Devices which their most cunning Adversaries can contrive against them; and his Power, which loveth to be magnified in Weakness, will overthrow the Attempts of their most potent Enemies, and be an impregnable Bulwark to defend them from all Harm. The whole Book of God is filled with those Deliverances which he constantly gave to such as feared him; and whoever will search into profane History, will every where meet with Instances of the same Nature; I shall not therefore tire your Patience with reckoning them up, being much too numerous to be mentioned particularly. For all the Creatures are but God's Instruments; and as the most despicable of them in his Hands can become the dreadful Inflicters of his Vengeance,

Vol. II. geance, so the most furious and frightful
are unable to offend, if he vouchsafeth to
restrain and bridle them. The Safety
which he extendeth to such as are his
Servants, even in the midst of Dangers
and common Calamities, is most elegant-
ly expressed in *Psalm xci.* by *David*, who
had happily experienced the Truth of it;
where he addresseth himself in these
Words to the righteous Man; Surely,
saith he, *God shall deliver thee from the
Snare of the Fowler, and from the noisome
Pestilence; he shall cover thee with his
Feathers, and under his Wings shalt thou
be safe; his Truth shall be thy Shield and
Buckler; thou shalt not be afraid for the
Terror by Night, nor the Arrow that flieth
by Day; nor for the Pestilence that walk-
eth in Darknes, nor for the Destruction
that wasteth at Noon-day; a Thousand
shall fall at thy Side, and ten Thousand at
thy right Hand, but it shall not come nigh
thee.* Now followeth the Reason of this
signal Protection; *Because thou hast made
the Lord, which is my Refuge, even the
most High, thy Habitation; therefore no
Evil shall befall thee, neither shall any
Plague come nigh thy Dwelling.* A most
clear and lively Description, and so very
plain, that it needeth no Comment, of
that wonderful Care which God will
take

take of all those who are conversant in the Exercises of Piety, in the most eminent Dangers, and under the most hazardous Circumstances. If then no Evil can be brought upon us, by the joint Malice of Men and Devils; and none of the Creatures can have Power to hurt us, unless it be given to them by the Sufferance of God: And if God will not give his Permission to them, to molest or injure his Friends and Favourites; then may we conclude, with all the Reason imaginable, that a religious Life and Conversation, which recommendeth us to the Favour and Protection of our God, is the best Security against all such Evils as might be brought upon us by the Malice of Men or Devils; *That none of them shall happen to the just.*

THUS have I endeavoured to make out the Truth of that single Proposition, which I laid down as the Subject of my present Discourse; namely, *That a religious Life and Conversation is the best Security against all manner of Evils.* And the Proof of this Proposition hath consisted in a particular Enquiry into the several Sorts of Harms to which we are exposed in this World; whether such as are immediately inflicted by God, or such as are occasioned by our selves, or such as

Vol. II. are brought upon us by the Malice of others; in every one of which I have attempted to make out, that Piety is our best and firmest Security; that none of these, and consequently no Evil whatsoever, shall happen to the Just.

GIVE me leave now to close up all with a Word or two of Application, and so I shall conclude.

PIETY, we see, is the grand Elixir, the universal Remedy against all those Evils, to which we are subject in this mortal Life; we are here surrounded with Dangers, and *compassed about with Infirmities*; we have reason to fear, lest God should be armed against us; we have cause to apprehend, lest we should occasion some Miseries to our selves; and lest more should be intended and contrived against us by others: And shall we then neglect the only certain Means, by which we may be defended against such numerous Calamities? Is there any Thing so distasteful in the Duty required, as should rather incline us to venture all these Hazards, than to set our selves about the Practice of it? To be just is no more than to follow after the Thing that is good; and Good is desirable in its own Nature; we have such an inward Tendency and Propension towards it, that nothing
which

which is ill can debauch our Affections, but by taking upon it self the Appearance of being good: If then a seeming Good doeth so often allure us, if we can thus be wrought upon by its Counterfeit and Shadow; how ought we to be enamoured on the real Substance? How little should we scruple to be Followers of that? But when besides its native Beauty, and those engaging Attractions which invite us to its Practice; it is also a Security against all Manner of Evils; how can we resist such powerful Inducements, and not immediately resolve to be conversant in it? Are we able of our selves to plunge out of all those Miseries, to which the Frailty of our Condition perpetually exposeth us? If not, why refuse we such a powerful Assistance, as may enable us in all Difficulties to be more than Conquerors? As to those Evils which are inflicted immediately by God, and are the Result of his Will and Pleasure; are we able to combat with Omnipotency, or to stand in Opposition against *him that is girded about with Strength*? Can we wrest the Thunder out of his Almighty Hand, or stand the Shock of it fearless and unmoved? Can we be unshaken by the Whirlwinds of his Displeasure, or unconsumed by his Wrath, which is a devour-

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Serm.

XX

Vol. II. ing Fire? If not, why do not we make use of the only Method which can guard us against a Fury that must otherwise destroy us? *Let us kiss the Son, lest he be angry, and so we perish from the right Way, when his Wrath is kindled, yea, but a little; blessed are all they that put their Trust in him.* Again, as to those Evils which are occasioned by our selves, and are the Effects either of Sin or Carelessness. Can we wrestle with those Distempers which are the Consequences of our Vices, or struggle with those Extremities which are occasioned by our Heedlessness? Can we bear unconcernedly the Rackings of the Gout, the Burnings of a Fever, or the Freezings of an Ague? Can we be calm and sedate under the Pinchings of Poverty, when Hunger and Thirst, and Nakedness, beset us round? Can we preserve a *Stoical* Insensibility under Circumstances so uneasy and vexatious as these? Alas! Are we not rather apt to fly out into Impatience, upon the least and most tolerable of these Afflictions! And why then do we not arm our selves against all these Inconveniences, by a Life that is just and inoffensive? Which will either secure us against this Train of Infirmities; or at least enable us to break the Force of them, by

a Christian Patience and Resignation? They may perhaps even then admonish us, and give us sometimes an Opportunity of exercising our Graces; but they shall never be able to do us any Harm, if we will be the Practitioners of that which is good. But farther, as to those Evils which are brought upon us by the Malice of Men or Devils, and only tolerated by God's Connivance or Permission; are we able to extricate our selves out of all those Difficulties, which either the cunning Subtilty of intriguing Adversaries, or the united Force of powerful Enemies, is every Day preparing and mustering against us? Are we Unapprehensive of those Dangers which seem to threaten us, and from which nothing can secure us but the Protection of our God? Are we able to resist our grand Adversary the Devil, and to fight with Powers and Principalities, and the Rulers of Darkness? Can we defeat all the Wiles of so subtil a Contriver, and enter into the Lists against so formidable an Opposite? If we cannot, why do we not procure to our selves the Assistance of our God, who is only able to protect us in the midst of such Extremities? Who can blast the Devices of our designing Foes, and make the Counsels of the People to be of none

Vol. II. effect; and who can qualify us also so to resist the Devil, as to constrain him to flee before us. This he will do, if we recommend our selves to his Favour, by being the Followers of that which is just.

BUT as a religious Life and Conversation is that which will intitle us to the divine Protection, and thereby defend us from all manner of Evils; so nothing will more confirm us in Piety and Holiness, and so derive upon us those Advantages which I mentioned; than being frequently conversant in the Exercise of that Duty, which now calleth for our immediate Attendance. The Body and Blood of our blessed Saviour are those sacred Vehicles and Conveyances, by which Grace is communicated to all worthy Receivers, and they are enabled to make large Advances in the Way of Godliness: By these we shall be strengthened in our just Resolutions, and qualified to abound in the Work of the Lord. When Christ hath condescended thus to dwell within our Souls, what Evils shall be able to assault that Garrison which is defended against them by so invincible a Protector? How can we be apprehensive of any of those Evils, which God inflicteth upon his Enemies, when his well beloved Son hath taken Possession of our Hearts, and admiteth

miteth us into the Number of his adopted Brethren? Instead of any Harm or Disturbance from him, we shall feel the comfortable Broodings of his Spirit, hatching the blessed Fruits of Love, Joy, and Peace; and shall freely share in the happy Dispensations of him, *who is the Giver of all good Gifts*. What Apprehensions can we lie under of any Evils to be occasioned by our selves, when we have received into our Hearts so adorable an Inmate, as cannot but imprint upon us the greatest Reverence, and make us manage all our Actions with the utmost Caution? Instead of any rebellious Appetites, which might cause an inward Discomposure, we shall find all our Faculties submissive and obedient, and awed by the Majesty of so divine a Neighbour. Why should we dread the Malice of Men or Devils, when we are possessed of so powerful a Supporter, and have a Champion to oppose them that is unconquerable? In vain shall the Sons of Men exalt themselves against us, when we are so intimately united with him, to whom a Name is given above all Names, at the very Mention of which every Knee must bow? In vain shall the Devil, that roaring Lion, attempt to make us his miserable Prey, when we have a greater on our Side,

Vol. II. even the *Lion* of the Tribe of *Judah*; and are armed against him as *Michael* was of old, *who overcame him by the Blood of the Lamb*. Thus if we practise this Duty as we ought, we shall secure our Innocence, and consequently our Safety; and may quiet all our Fears with the Wise Man's *Aphorism*, *There shall no Evil happen to the Just*.

LET us then pray to God our merciful Father, That he would vouchsafe to give us his Assistance in all our Troubles and Adversities, whensoever they oppress us; and that by leading us on in the Paths of Righteousness, he would save us from all Evils which he would otherwise inflict; and from all such others as might be occasioned by our selves; and that *all those Evils, which the Craft and Subtilty of the Devil or Man worketh against us, may be brought to nought; that we his Servants, being hurt by nothing, may evermore give Thanks to him, in his holy Church, through Jesus Christ our Lord: To whom with him, and the Holy Ghost, be ascribed all Power, Honour, Might, Majesty, and Dominion, henceforth and for evermore. Amen.*



SERMON XXVIII.

Our Lord's Coming a great
Motive to Watchfulness.

MATT. XXIV. 42.

*Watch therefore, for ye know not what
Hour your Lord doeth come.*



THE chief Opposers of a future State were the ancient Sadducees, and the modern Atheists; the former, as it is probable, grounded that erroneous Opinion of theirs upon the temporal Advantages and Inconveniencies laid down in the *Mosaical* Law, as the

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Vol. II. Reward of Virtue, and the Punishment of evil Doers; whilst their short-sighted Faith, being unable to discern spiritual Objects at a greater Distance, was contented to take up with that nearer, though worse Prospect: The latter having plunged themselves into all manner of Sensuality, and consequently being without Hopes of a future State, would fain be exempt from the Fears of one also; and that they may, during the Course of this Life, with less Concern, indulge their brutal Appetites, endeavour to persuade themselves and others, that after Death they *shall become like the Beasts that perish*: And as the one of them, by denying that there were Angels or Spirits, did consequently disbelieve the Resurrection of the Body, and the Immortality of the Soul, the two great Foundations of a Judgment to come; so the other, by not owning the Existence of a Deity, must necessarily disallow of his coming to Judgment. But we, who are taught, by *the sure Word of Prophecy*, to entertain truer Notions both of his Nature and our own; who are convinced, by the clearest and most unanswerable Arguments, both that he existeth eternally, and that we are immortal; must needs plainly infer from these Premises, that he

will

will dispense, and we shall receive, an eternal Retribution of Reward or Punishment; that there will be a Time when we must give an Account of all our Thoughts, Words, and Actions; and shall have assigned to us an everlasting Portion of Bliss, or of Misery, *according to the Works which we have wrought in the Body, whether they be good, or whether they be evil.* But though we have all the Evidence for the Truth of this Assertion, that the Nature of the Thing is capable of bearing; yet, as to the particular Time when it will be, here we must confess our selves to be wholly at a Loss; God having thought fit, in his infinite Wisdom, to deposite that in the Treasury of his own Knowledge; and, whilst it appeareth to him with the greatest Brightness, to turn the cloudy Side of the Pillar towards us: And yet, though this Circumstance is concealed from us, the Doctrine will afford us great Occasions of Improvement; and from the Certainty of the Event, and the Uncertainty of its Time, we cannot but draw this practical Conclusion, to be always prepared for it whensoever it shall happen, that we may not be surprized in so important a Concernment. *Watch therefore* (saith our Saviour, who best knew the great Moment

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Vol. II. ment of it) *for ye know not what Hour your Lord doeth come.*

Two Hours there are in which the Lord will come, the Hour of Death, and the Hour of Judgment; and these two, though most certain that they shall be, for it is appointed unto all Men once to die, and after that the Judgment; yet are they equally uncertain as to the Time when they shall be: Only this we know, that we ought to watch as much against the one as the other, because as Death leaveth us, so Judgment will find us; as our Condition is when this frail Life endeth, so shall it be with us to all Eternity.

THERE are three Things observable from the Words of the Text, which I shall make it my Business to insist upon at present:

- I. THE Certainty of a future Judgment; that there will be an Hour *when our Lord will come.*
- II. THE Uncertainty of that particular Time, in which this future Judgment will be administered, that *we know not what Hour our Lord doeth come.* And,
- III. THE Necessity which lieth upon us, to be very vigilant over all our

Actions, lest it should come upon us unawares, and find us unprovided for it; *Watch therefore, for ye know not what Hour your Lord daeth come.*

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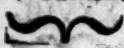
I. THEN, I shall endeavour to prove the Certainty of a future Judgment, that there will be an *Hour when our Lord will come.*

THIS is a fundamental Article of our Christian Faith; and that upon which the Purity of our Profession is, in a great Measure, founded; for if we take away this powerful Motive, which so forcibly addresseth it self to our Hopes and our Fears, the two great commanding Passions of our Souls, we shall hardly find any thing capable of restraining us from indulging our selves in a Course of successful Wickedness: It will therefore be a very useful Labour to confirm a Truth of such grand Importance; and which, of all others, will oblige us most effectually to keep a *Conscience void of Offence towards God and towards Man.* Now the Truth of this Assertion will evidently appear, if we consider,

1. ITS Agreeableness to the Nature of God; and,
2. ITS Conformity with the Nature of Man.

I. THEN

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 I. THEN, the Certainty of a Judgment to come is unquestionable, because it is agreeable to the Nature of God.

God is represented to us as a Being, infinitely perfect, in relation to all his Attributes; and whatever implieth an Imperfection in any of them, striketh at the very Existence of a Deity; but neither the Wisdom, nor the Goodness, nor the Justice of God, not to mention his other Attributes, too numerous to insist upon, can be vindicated from Weakness and Insufficiency, unless we allow of a Judgment to come.

I.) As to his Wisdom: God hath divided his Creatures into several Ranks and Orders, and hath suited their Faculties and Qualifications to such Ends and Enjoyments as they are designed for; thus to Beasts, who have no Expectation of future Happiness, such Appetites are given, as barely fit them for the Perception of sensual Pleasures, and the Entertainments of this present Life: But Man being endowed with a reasonable Soul, and by that made capable of spiritual Refreshments, and of the Joys and Satisfaction of another World, must therefore be supposed to be intended for them: For infinite Wisdom could never contrive any thing in vain; and consequently

ly

ly the rational Soul, being fitted for the Enjoyments of a future State, there must be allowed such a future State, wherein those Faculties are to be exerted and employed. Another Instance of Wisdom in Perfection, is to be free from all manner of Imposition, not to be liable to any Mistake, but rightly and truly to distinguish all Things; but this Part of the divine Wisdom is never so fully justified and asserted, as in our Allowance of a Judgment to come; *When the Thoughts of all Hearts shall be discovered*, when every Disguise shall be pulled off, every Dissimulation and Imposture found out, and *all Things shall appear naked and open, unto the Eyes of him with whom we have to do*. Nothing therefore can more effectually vindicate the Wisdom of God, from all Manner of Weakness or Insufficiency, than a firm Persuasion of a Judgment to come; by which we shall be convinced, that our great Creator hath made nothing in vain, but every Part of his Workmanship is designed to its proper End; and that nothing can lie hid from his piercing Sight, but that he is the *great Discerner of all Hearts*.

2.) As to the Goodness of God: This is most remarkably and signally asserted, by our Acknowledgment of a Judgment
to

Vol. II. to come. The infinite Goodness of Almighty God cannot be so narrowly contracted, as to influence us no farther than the short Span of our natural Lives, but must launch out to all Eternity. Man, we know, is his Favourite Creature, and yet, unless we acknowledge a State beyond the present, he were the most wretched Part of the whole Creation; the Miseries and Inconveniencies to which he is here exposed, being far more numerous and affrighting, than those of any other Animal, however mean and despicable: These are only liable to the Pains of Sense, and never antedate their Miseries by the Apprehension of them, before they come; nor prolong them by the Contemplation of them, when they are past; their Sufferings are as short as the outward Smart, and of no longer Continuance than the present Infliction: But with Men it fareth much otherwise; they may be wounded in a nicer and more tender Part, and the Sorrows of the Soul may out-vie the Torments of the Body; neither are their Sufferings so momentary and transient, as those of irrational Beings; since they often commence unhappy before their time, by the bare Fear of being so; and spin out the Misfortunes of a few Hours

to Years and Ages, by an uneasy Reflection upon them afterwards. The Case therefore being thus impartially stated, how justly may all the Sons of *Adam* take up the Apostle's Expression a little varied, *If in this Life only we have hopes, we are of all Creatures the most miserable?* But can we suppose that infinite Goodness would provide no better for its darling Creature? And that God, who put all Things in Subjection under his Feet, designed only to make him more splendidly unhappy? Is it not much more reasonable to conclude, that he intendeth to consult as well his Felicity as his Dignity? Resolving to *make him bear of Joy and Gladness*, as well as to *crown him with Honour and Worship?* Now this can no otherwise be performed, but by admitting him into such Privileges in another Life, as may countervail the Inconveniencies which he suffereth in this: And therefore, unless we will impeach the divine Goodness, we must allow of a future State, and a Judgment to come.

3.) As to the divine Justice: Nothing can make it out so clearly and undeniably, as our stedfast Belief of a Judgment to come. The usual Dispensations of Providence, in this Life, are not so very regular and even, as may suffice to justify

Vol. II. fy the Ways of God towards Man: Common Blessings are dispensed promiscuously; *his Sun shineth equally upon the Just and the Unjust*; and frequently the Wicked triumph and succeed, whilst the Men that work Righteousness are afflicted and oppressed: But though God suffereth Things to go thus for some time, and since no Man is so profligately impious, as not to have done some good Action, God may reward it with a worldly Blessing; and since no other is so exactly upright, as not to have been guilty of some Transgression, God may punish it with a temporal Affliction; though, I say, Things may go thus for a while, yet the Judge of all the Earth will certainly do right; Vengeance is his, and he will repay; which, since he doeth not always fully in this Life, we must necessarily allow of a Judgment to come; of such a Time, when all that are in the Graves shall hear his Voice, and shall come forth; they that have done Good unto the Resurrection of Life, and they that have done Evil unto the Resurrection of Damnation: No other Way can the Justice of God be sufficiently vindicated; by this only Means will it either stop the Mouths of all Gain-sayers, or open them to confess, that *Verily there is a Reward both for the Righteous*

Righteous and the Wicked, doubtless there is a God that judgeth in the Earth. Sermon. This XXVIII.

therefore is one convincing Argument, to engage us to the Belief of a Judgment to come; because it is agreeable to the Nature of God; particularly in relation to those three great Attributes, his Wisdom, his Goodness, and his Justice.

2. A SECOND Reason to induce us to the Belief of a Judgment to come, is the Conformity of it with the Nature of Man.

MAN hath an inbred Propension, a natural Tendency to Immortality; and the Notion of a future State is so ingrafted in his very Being, that however the Wicked and Atheistical Part of Mankind may wish or endeavour to suppress it, it will discover it self, against their Will, in several of their Actions: Hence it is, that they would have their dwelling Places to endure from one Generation to another, and call the Lands after their own Names; hence it is, that they affect to propagate themselves anew in their Offspring; and to gain a sort of Immortality, in the long Succession of their Posterity; for they, as well as the Righteous, desire to be had in everlasting Remembrance; and that their Memory may endure for Ages. Now this is the great Prerogative of the rational Soul,

Vol. II. Soul, by which it asserteth a Superiority over the rest of the Creation; in that the End of this mortal Life, which putteth a Period to their Being, doeth but place this in a Condition of never perishing; and when they cease to be at all, this beginneth to be immortal: Without this great distinguishing Privilege, Man had been levelled with the common Herd of his own Subjects, and had scarce been more to be respected, than even the very Beasts that perish. But God would never have given him such eminent Abilities, by which he is qualified to pry into all the Secrets of the invisible World, and to be conversant and familiar with that Land of Spirits, unless he had intended that those excellent Faculties should be one Day employed about their proper Objects: He would never have given him so large a Heart, and such unlimited Desires, as nothing in this World is able fully to content; if he had not designed that they should be satisfied in another: He would have had no Thoughts beyond the gratifying of his present Appetites, no inward Checks of Conscience, no Dictates of Reason, to stop him in the Course of his sensual Enjoyments; if he were to consult no Interest but that of this Life, and were
not

not Candidate for another in Reversion. Sermon.
And yet we find, even amongst the worst of Men, before their Consciences are feared by habitual Impieties, such an inward Dread of a future Reckoning, as either sometimes with-holdeth them from very gross Enormities, or maketh them apprehensive of the Danger which they incur by committing them; and God hath not left himself without a Witness in our Hearts, of the Certainty of a Being that presideth over us, and of that Judgment which he will one Day most infallibly pass upon us. This then is another most powerful Argument to convince us that there is a Judgment to come, because of its Conformity with our human Nature, with the very Frame and Constitution of a reasonable Being. And thus much may suffice for the Proof of my first Proposition, that there is an *Hour in which our Lord will come*; because it is agreeable to the Nature both of God and of Man, that there should be such an Hour of his Coming. I proceed now,

II. To my second Proposition, namely, to consider the Uncertainty of that particular Time, in which this future Judgment will be administered; *That*

Vol. II. *we know not what Hour our Lord doeth
come.*

OUR Saviour positively assureth us, in Verse 36 of this same Chapter, *That of this Day and Hour no Man knoweth, no not the Angels of Heaven, but his Father only.* This is one of those incommunicable Secrets, which he hath thought fit to reserve to his own peculiar Knowledge; and which he hath not imparted to those glorified Spirits, which continually see his Face, and attend upon his Throne; nay, by St. Mark this Expression is carried farther, *No, not the Angels in Heaven, neither the Son, but the Father. He who was the Brightness of his Father's Glory, and the express Image of his Person; who was made so much better than the Angels, as he hath by Inheritance obtained a more excellent Name than they;* was (as he was Man) ignorant of that Day and that Hour, the Knowledge of which the Father had reserved entirely to himself. And certainly this had never been so closely concealed, but for some very weighty and important Reasons; for God would never have locked up this unutterable Secret, but for the Accomplishment of some very considerable Matter; such as might at once give us a remarkable Instance, both of his
Wisdom

Wisdom and his Goodness. For by this Serm.
Means it was capable of having a due ^{XXVIII.}
Influence upon all the several Ages of
the World, who, by being kept ignorant
of the punctual Time of his Coming,
were thereby engaged to expect their
Lord hourly: the Force of the Argu-
ment would have mightily been lost, up-
on those who lived many Hundred Years
ago, if they had known this great Event
had been at so considerable a Distance;
we are but little wrought upon by such
remote Apprehensions; and should be
apt to flatter our selves, that many things
may intervene, which may prevent a
Danger that is so very far off: but when
we are not certain but it may just hang
over us, it will reasonably incline us to
be ready for it always. It is probable if
the Time had been exactly pointed out,
it might have been so far from making
Men generally watchful, that none would
have thought themselves concerned up-
on that Account, but such in whose
Days it was likely to happen; and so by
giving a good Caution to those few then
living, it had allowed a full Swing to all
the rest of Mankind; but God in his
Wisdom and Goodness thought fit to keep
it secret, that it might have an Effect
more universally, that every one might

Vol. II. be struck with Awe and Reverence, not knowing how soon they might be called to so severe a Reckoning. Nay, it may be a Question, whether even those few, *upon whom the Ends of the World shall come*, would be any thing the better for such a Knowledge; and more likely it seemeth that it would encourage even them, to delay their Repentance to the very last, than be any Means to quicken them in their Duty: for we generally look upon the Business of Religion to be such a one, as may be dispatched in a very short Time; and therefore the Certainty of the Lord's not Coming till such a Time, would be more apt to encourage us in our Sins for a Season, than the most positive Assurance of his Coming then, would be to make us prepare our selves for his Reception. When the Criminal that is confined for some heinous Offence, is informed of the fixed Season that his Judge will send for him; we daily see how regardless he is in the mean Time, how little Care he taketh to prepare for his Defence; when if he did not know but he might call for him on the Morrow, it would in all likelihood induce him to provide for it to Day: and thus it is with the generality of Christians, they endeavour to persuade themselves that the

the Day of Death and of Judgment is not nigh at hand, and then they think themselves secure in their impious Practices ; but how much more safe would they believe themselves to be, and consequently how much more would they indulge themselves in Wickedness, if they were certain the evil Hour were at some distance from them ! How would they be tempted to *smite their Fellow-servants, and to eat and to drink with the Drunken,* if they were assured that *their Lord would delay his Coming* ; when they can dare to allow themselves the Liberty of doing so, whilst they only say so in their Hearts ! and therefore God, in his Goodness and Wisdom, hath concealed this from our Knowledge, that we may not presume upon his Absence ; but prepare our selves daily for his Reception, *who will come in a Day when we look not for him, and in an Hour that we are not ware of* ; and this bringeth me to the Consideration of,

Serm.
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III. My third and last Particular ; namely, to shew the Necessity which lieth upon us, to be very vigilant over all our Actions ; lest this Hour should come upon us unawares, and find us unprovided for it : This is the Inference which our

Vol. II. blessed Saviour maketh, *Watch therefore,*
 ~~~~~ *for ye know not what Hour your Lord doeth*  
*come.*

LET the Truth of our Lord's Coming be never so certain, yet because to us it is uncertain, as to the particular Time in which it will happen, we may be surprized by it unless we stand upon our Guard; it may overtake us, when we little think of it; it may come suddenly *as a Thief in the Night*, and be upon us in an Hour when we think our selves most secure; *Let us watch therefore, for we know not the hour.* The Words are intended by our blessed Saviour, as a special Direction to a holy Preparation, a fitting our selves against the great Day of the Lord: and the Expression seemeth to import a Duty of the greatest Heedfulness and Attention; it requireth that a more than ordinary care be taken, that we should indefatigably play the Centinels; lest if our Sobriety and Vigilance should at any time be slackened, that fatal Negligence might be the Cause of our Destruction: and this Advice here given is of such general Importance, so necessary to be weighed and observed universally; that our Saviour being doubtful lest some should apprehend, that his Disciples, to whom he usually addressed his Exhortations, were the only

Persons

Persons concerned in the Caution which **Serm.**  
 he gave; assureth them in the Thirteenth **XXVIII.**  
 of St. Mark's Gospel, that it is every  
 Man's true Interest to be conversant in  
 this Duty; *And what I say unto you, saith  
 he, I say unto all, Watch.* A Duty of  
 whose Usefulness and Necessity we shall  
 not fail to be abundantly convinced, if  
 we will but reflect upon the following  
 Considerations:

1. THAT the Matters, about which  
 it is conversant, are of the greatest Mo-  
 ment and Importance.

2. THAT the Dangers of its Omission  
 are of a very high and dreadful Na-  
 ture: And,

3. THAT a Miscarriage in this Affair  
 is irrecoverable, and not possibly to be  
 remedied.

1. THEN, we ought to be careful  
 to discharge this Duty of watching; be-  
 cause the Matters about which it is con-  
 versant, are of the greatest Moment and  
 Importance.

MATTERS of small Consequence may  
 be easily over-looked, but such as car-  
 ry Weight and Consideration along with  
 them, require and deserve our utmost  
 Care and Attention; and he must be  
 guilty of an unpardonable Neglect, who,  
 in



Vol. II. in such a Case as that, shall be heedless and indifferent. But this Duty of Watchfulness against the Coming of our Lord, is directed to such Ends as are extreamly momentous: What Concernment can affect us? What can stir up our Diligence, if everlasting Happiness be not a sufficient Motive? What can incline us to stand upon our Guard, if the eternal Interest of our immortal Souls be not an Argument strong enough to persuade us to it? And yet this Preparation against the Coming of our Lord, this keeping our Souls in Order for his Reception, is attended with Consequences of no less Importance: For as he findeth us, when he cometh, to have been more or less watchful, so will he deal with us more or less favourably, in his infinite and eternal Remunerations. Did we then consider, that upon this dependeth the well-being both of Soul and Body to endless Ages, we could not sure trifle in a Matter of such Concernment, but should think all our Care little enough in so important an Affair. But,

2. WE ought to be careful to discharge this Duty of watching, because the Dangers of its Omission are  
of

of a very high and dreadful Nature. Serm.  
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HE that walketh upon the Brink of a Precipice, had need to tread warily, and take Care of every Step; because the least Trip is as much as his Life is worth: And he who seeth what Hazard he may run by a Neglect, will be much more watchful against his Lord's Coming, since he otherwise runneth the Risque of being eternally miserable. Our Way, indeed, is beset with continual Difficulties, we meet with many Temptations and Oppositions; and we had need to practise a more than ordinary Vigilancy, to secure our selves from being misled by them: But of all Dangers, the most dreadful that we can run, is that of not being able to make up our great Account, and therefore our utmost Endeavours should be employed to that End. Did we but reflect upon the miserable Consequences, which must inevitably attend so fatal a Negligence; did we seriously weigh what it is to be exposed to Torments that are eternal and insupportable; this sure would quicken us to use our utmost Diligence, that we may not fall into Extremities of so dismal a Nature: And yet we know, that the foolish

Vol. II. foolish Virgins, who slept while the Bridegroom was passing by, were utterly excluded from entering into the Bride-chamber; and that Favour was allowed only to the wise ones, who watched and trimmed their Lamps in Expectation of his Arrival. But,

3. WE ought to be careful to discharge this Duty of watching, because a Miscarriage in this Affair is irrecoverable, and not possibly to be remedied. This is not only a Business of the most grand Importance, and such whose Omission is extremely dangerous; but it is also a Concernment of so ticklish a Nature, that a Mismanagement of it is wholly un-retrievable: We can never raise our selves up, if we now fall, nor is there any renewing again unto Repentance. In such Miscarriages as may be recovered, there is some Hopes of bringing Things about again; and a former Negligence may be made Amends for, by a more than ordinary future Carefulness; but when the Case is of a desperate Nature, once to miscarry is to be lost for ever: With what Caution then and Judgment ought we to play that Game, where our whole Concern lies at Stake; and if it be lost, we are certainly ruined, irrecoverably  
undone



undone to all Eternity? Such is the Condition of which I am now speaking, the being prepared to meet our Lord at the Hour of his Coming; if we are unprovided to give a good Account of our selves then, we are for ever incapacitated to do so afterwards; and have nothing more to do, in those wretched Circumstances, but to submit to a Punishment which will be insupportable: For the State in which we then shall be, is unalterable, and as the Tree falleth, so will it lie; as Death sendeth us out of the World, so must we always remain, either everlastingly happy, or eternally miserable; *for it is appointed unto Men once to die, once, and but once, and after that, unavoidably, the Judgment.* Indeed, if we had more Lives than one, could we return from the Grave, and act over this Scene again, there might be Hopes, though we had once miscarried, of recovering all by a second Venture: But when the Grave giveth us up, the Judgment will seize us, and we must then infallibly appear before the great Tribunal, to receive a Trial, and undergo a Sentence, which will be peremptory, final, and irreverfible. How heedfully ought we then to manage our selves, how

I

care-

Serm.

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Vol. II. carefully should we watch against the  
 ~~~~~ Coming of our Lord; since a Failure in  
 ~~~~~ this Point can never be atoned for, by  
 the greatest Diligence that we would ex-  
 ercise afterwards!

SINCE then it is most certain that our Lord will come, because it is both suitable to the divine and human Nature, that there should be such a Coming of his to Judgment; since God hath thought fit to conceal the Time of his Coming, lest it should encourage some to be careless in the mean while, and therefore we cannot tell how soon it may overtake us; how much ought we all to stand upon our Guard, lest this Day should surprize us, and find us unprovided! Our most important Concern lieth then at Stake; an Omission of this exposeth us to a very great Danger, and the Failure we then make can never be retrieved: These Considerations should prevail upon us all, to let the Certainty of his Coming have a strong Influence upon our Faith; and the Uncertainty of the Time of it, a just Effect upon our Obedience: To be always in a due Posture for his Reception, who will assuredly come, though we know not when; and, by a constant Watchfulness over all our Actions, by a  
 Life

Life that is innocent and unblameable, to Sermon  
qualify our selves for that happy Com- XXVIII.  
mendation, *Blessed is that Servant, whom*  
*his Lord, when he cometh, shall find so*  
*doing.*

*The End of the SECOND VOLUME.*







The End of the Second Volume.

